



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BRIAN ALBRIGHT
DIRECTOR

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MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

November 8, 2011

Project Name: Ramona Grasslands Preserve

**This Document is Considered Draft Until it is Adopted by the Appropriate
County of San Diego Decision-Making Body**

This Mitigated Negative Declaration is comprised of this form along with the
Environmental Initial Study that includes the following:

- a. Initial Study Form
 - b. Environmental Analysis Form and attached extended studies for Biological
Resources (including a Jurisdictional Delineation Report) and Cultural
Resources
 - c. Attached Resources Management Plan and Vegetation Management Plan
1. California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration Findings:

Find, that this Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the decision-making body's independent judgment and analysis, and; that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information contained in this Mitigated Negative Declaration and the comments received during the public review period; and that revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the project applicant would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur; and, on the basis of the whole record before the decision-making body (including this Mitigated Negative Declaration) that there is no substantial evidence that the project as revised will have a significant effect on the environment.

2. Required Mitigation Measures:

Refer to the attached Environmental Initial Study for the rationale requiring the following measures:

A. Biological Resources

1. In order to avoid potential impacts to federally and/or state-listed plant species, the following measures shall be implemented:
 - a. A biological monitor shall be present during all project construction within the vicinity of areas occupied by listed plant species to ensure avoidance.
 - b. Focused surveys for listed plant species shall be conducted within the off-site east-west trail easement that connects the eastern and western portions of the Preserve and within the vicinity of the proposed new off-site trail segment on the Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) property if the alternative off-site Santa Maria Creek crossing is utilized. The final alignment of the trail in these offsite locations shall avoid impacts to listed plant species.
2. In order to avoid potential impacts to County List A and/or B plant species, the following measures shall be implemented:
 - a. A biological monitor shall be present during all project construction within the vicinity of areas occupied by County List A and B plant species to ensure impacts are avoided or minimized to the extent feasible.
 - b. Focused surveys for County List A and B plant species shall be conducted within the off-site east-west trail easement that connects the eastern and western portions of the Preserve, and within the vicinity of the proposed off-site trail segment on the RMWD property if the alternative off-site Santa Maria Creek crossing is utilized. The final alignment of the trails in these off-site locations shall avoid impacts to County List A and B plant species to the maximum extent feasible.
3. During construction of all proposed new trail segments in the vicinity of suitable/occupied arroyo toad habitat in the NW portion of the Preserve (unless deemed unsuitable for toad), including the crossing (bridge or dry weather crossing) of Santa Maria Creek arroyo toad avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented. Measures will be finalized during consultation under the Federal Endangered Species Act, but could include the following:

- a. No construction activities would take place during the arroyo toad breeding season (March 15 through July 1) within suitable arroyo toad breeding habitat.
- b. Access to the project sites should be via existing access routes to the greatest extent possible. Project-related vehicle travel would be limited to daylight hours as arroyo toads use roadways primarily during nighttime hours
- c. Activities that attract small insects (e.g., ants) and toad predators should be minimized by keeping the project sites as clean as possible. All food-related trash should be placed in sealed bins or regularly removed from the site
- d. Dust control (i.e., water truck spraying) should be performed in a manner that does not attract toads into the action area and by performing when the toad exclusion fence is up and minimizing overspray.
- e. Arroyo toad exclusion fencing would be installed around the perimeter of all work areas within suitable arroyo toad upland habitat prior to construction. The purpose of the fence is to exclude arroyo toads from the work sites. Such fencing would consist of fabric or plastic at least two feet high, staked firmly to the ground with the lower one foot of material stretching outward along the ground and secured with a continuous line of gravel bags. No digging or vegetation removal will be associated with the installation of this fence and all fencing materials (i.e., mesh, stakes, etc.) would be removed following construction within the work area. Ingress and egress of equipment and personnel will use a single access point to the site. This access point will be as narrow as possible and will be closed off by exclusionary fencing when personnel are not on the project site.
- f. Within the week prior to commencement of construction activities, but after exclusionary fencing has been installed, at least two surveys for arroyo toads would be conducted on consecutive nights within the fenced areas by a USFWS-approved biologist. Surveys would be conducted during appropriate climatic conditions and during the appropriate time of day or night to maximize the likelihood of encountering toads. If climatic conditions are not appropriate for arroyo toad movement during the surveys, a qualified biologist may attempt to illicit a response from the arroyo toads (during the night [i.e., at least 1 hour after sunset] with temperatures above 50 degrees Fahrenheit), by spraying the project area with water to simulate a rain event. If arroyo toads were found within the project area they would be captured and

translocated, by the biologist, to the closest area of suitable habitat along Santa Maria Creek. The biologist would coordinate with the County and the USFWS to determine a specific translocation site prior to moving any arroyo toads. The date, time of capture, specific location of capture (using GPS), approximate size, age, and health of the individual would be recorded and provided to the USFWS, within 2 weeks of the translocation, in both hard copy and digital format.

- g. Excavations will be properly covered to prevent toads from entering any open pits.
 - h. The USFWS-approved biologist would be on call and available as needed at other times in the event that a toad was encountered during the activities. The USFWS-approved biologist would be present on-site full-time, for 2-3 days, following any measurable rainfall.
 - i. If, during project implementation there is a toad sighting, the USFWS-approved biologist will halt work and contact the County. The County would contact the USFWS directly. Any type of "take" of toads, which includes digging up, handling (i.e., relocating the toad), injury, or death would be reported immediately to the USFWS.
 - j. If determined to be necessary, a biological monitor shall be present during major trail maintenance within suitable/occupied arroyo toad habitat to ensure potential impacts are avoided to the extent feasible.
4. In order to avoid potential impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rats, the following measures shall be implemented:
- a. A biological monitor shall be present during all trail construction within suitable/occupied SKR habitat to ensure avoidance of occupied burrows.
 - b. Prior to conducting trail maintenance activities in areas known to support SKR, a qualified biologist shall mark all occupied or potentially occupied burrows. Marked burrows shall be avoided by a distance of no less than 5 feet when using mechanical equipment.
 - c. Trail maintenance will not create berms 5 inches or higher.
5. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey to identify any active burrows shall be conducted within the vicinity of the off-site east-west trail easement that connects the eastern and western portions of the Preserve and within the vicinity of the off-site trail segment on RMWD property if the alternative Santa Maria Creek crossing is utilized. Pre-construction surveys must be completed no more than 30 days before initial brushing,

clearing, grubbing, or grading of this new trail section. The final trail alignment in this location shall avoid impacts to occupied burrows and, if occupied burrows are found within 300-feet of the proposed trail, trail construction shall occur outside of the breeding season for this species (i.e., September 1 to January 31).

6. Vegetation clearing or grading shall be restricted during the breeding season for migratory birds (approximately January 15 through September 15 annually) unless pre-construction surveys by a qualified biologist determine no nesting birds protected by the MBTA are located within grading/vegetation clearing areas. If active nests are identified within the impact area on site, vegetation clearing activities shall not occur within 300 feet of active migrant songbird nests, 500 feet of active tree nesting raptor nests, 300 feet of active burrowing owl burrows, and 800 feet of other ground-nesting raptor nests until either the breeding season has ended or the nest is no longer active.
7. The final alignment and design of the southern section of the pathway along Rangeland Road and the pathway along Highland Valley Road will avoid impacts to sensitive natural communities/riparian habitat to the maximum extent feasible. Where unavoidable impacts are proposed, they will be quantified and mitigated at established mitigation ratios (e.g., in accordance with ratios outlined in the county's adopted MSCP or, when adopted, the North County MSCP; See tables 1 and 2 below).
8. Significant impacts to sensitive natural communities resulting from unavoidable impacts will be offset by the off-site preservation of habitat, the purchase of mitigation credits within an approved mitigation bank, or in accordance with County Board Policy I-138 at established mitigation ratios (e.g., in accordance with ratios outlined in the county's adopted MSCP or, when adopted, the North County MSCP; See tables 1 and 2 below).
9. Prior to impacting regulated waters, including wetlands, the following permits/approval would be required to be obtained: (1) USACE, CWA, Section 404 permit for placement of dredged or fill material within waters of the U.S.; (2) RWQCB, CWA, Section 401 state water quality certification/waiver for an action that may result in degradation of waters of the State; (3) CDFG Streambed Alteration Agreement. If a span bridge is constructed for the proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek (or if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property is utilized), impacts would be avoided and no mitigation would be required. While, the construction of a trail/dry weather crossing of Santa Maria Creek would result in impacts; wetland creation is not proposed. The impact area, and immediately adjacent areas, is currently unvegetated and after project implementation, would continue to convey water. Mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands (disturbed wetland and

- non-vegetated channel) and non-wetland waters is proposed to consist of off-site restoration, and/or enhancement; the details of the mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional resources (including a conceptual mitigation plan) will be finalized as part of the permitting process with the USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB.
10. The final alignment and design of the southern section of the pathway along Rangeland Road and the pathway along Highland Valley Road will avoid impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and waters. Where unavoidable impacts are proposed, a formal wetland delineation will be conducted of the impact area, the impacts will be quantified, and impacts will be mitigated. Mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands (disturbed wetland and non-vegetated channel) and non-wetland waters is proposed to consist of off-site restoration, and/or enhancement; the details of the mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional resources (including a conceptual mitigation plan) will be finalized as part of the permitting process with the USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB.

Table 1. Habitat/Vegetation Communities Impacts and Proposed Mitigation (Proposed Creek Crossing)

| Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type | Impact Acreage | Mitigation Ratio ¹ | Required Mitigation Acreage | Acres Preserved ² | Off-site Mitigation Acreage |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Scrub and Chaparral | | | | | |
| Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 151.02 | -- |
| Disturbed Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub | 0.13 | 2:1 | 0.26 | 47.84 | 0.26 |
| Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub | 0.03 | 2:1 | 0.06 | 201.31 | 0.06 |
| Southern Mixed Chaparral | 0.11 | 0.5:1 | 0.055 | 1,228.00 | 0.055 |
| Disturbed Southern Mixed Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 157.80 | -- |
| Chamise Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 18.81 | -- |
| Scrub Oak Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 57.80 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>0.27</i> | | <i>0.375</i> | <i>1,862.58</i> | <i>0.375</i> |
| Grasslands | | | | | |
| Valley Needlegrass Grassland | -- | -- | -- | 8.16 | -- |
| Non-Native Grassland | 6.27 | 1:1 | 6.27 | 1,390.11 | 6.27 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>6.27</i> | | <i>6.27</i> | <i>1,398.27</i> | <i>6.27</i> |
| Wetlands | | | | | |
| Open Water | -- | -- | -- | 0.84 | -- |
| Alkali Marsh | -- | -- | -- | 8.81 | -- |
| Emergent Wetland | -- | -- | -- | 0.84 | -- |
| Disturbed Wetland | 0.006 | 3:1 | 0.018 | 0.804 | 0.018 |
| Non-Vegetated Channel | 0.002 | 3:1 | 0.006 | 0.348 | 0.006 |
| Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest | -- | -- | -- | 9.37 | -- |
| Mule Fat Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 23.26 | -- |
| Southern Willow Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 14.26 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>0.008</i> | | <i>0.024</i> | <i>58.532</i> | <i>0.024</i> |
| Woodlands | | | | | |

| Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type | Impact Acreage | Mitigation Ratio ¹ | Required Mitigation Acreage | Acres Preserved ² | Off-site Mitigation Acreage |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Non-Native Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 1.02 | -- |
| Eucalyptus Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 16.10 | -- |
| Open Coast Live Oak Woodland | 0.08 | 3:1 | 0.24 | 20.50 | 0.24 |
| Dense Coast Live Oak Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 82.13 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>0.08</i> | | <i>0.24</i> | <i>119.75</i> | <i>0.24</i> |
| Other Land Cover Types | | | | | |
| Agriculture | -- | -- | -- | 17.88 | -- |
| Developed Lands | -- | -- | -- | 1.50 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | | | -- | <i>43.2592</i> | -- |
| Total | 6.63 | | 6.91 | 3,482.39 | 6.91 |

1 – These ratios are subject to change if the North County MSCP is approved prior to project implementation.

2 – Acreage within the Preserve not impacted as part of the proposed project does not count towards the necessary mitigation acreage for impacts to sensitive vegetation communities

Table 2. Habitat/Vegetation Communities Impacts and Proposed Mitigation (Alternative Creek Crossing)

| Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type | Impact Acreage | Mitigation Ratio ¹ | Required Mitigation Acreage | Acres Preserved ² | Off-site Mitigation Acreage |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Scrub and Chaparral | | | | | |
| Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 151.02 | -- |
| Disturbed Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub | 0.13 | 2:1 | 0.26 | 47.84 | 0.26 |
| Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub | 0.03 | 2:1 | 0.06 | 201.31 | 0.06 |
| Southern Mixed Chaparral | 0.10 | 0.5:1 | 0.05 | 1,228.01 | 0.05 |
| Disturbed Southern Mixed Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 157.80 | -- |
| Chamise Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 18.81 | -- |
| Scrub Oak Chaparral | -- | -- | -- | 57.80 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>0.26</i> | | <i>0.37</i> | <i>1,862.59</i> | <i>0.37</i> |
| Grasslands | | | | | |
| Valley Needlegrass Grassland | -- | -- | -- | 8.16 | -- |
| Non-Native Grassland | 5.43 | 1:1 | 5.43 | 1,390.95 | 5.43 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>5.43</i> | | <i>5.43</i> | <i>1,399.11</i> | <i>5.43</i> |
| Wetlands | | | | | |
| Open Water | -- | -- | -- | 0.84 | -- |
| Alkali Marsh | -- | -- | -- | 8.81 | -- |
| Emergent Wetland | -- | -- | -- | 0.84 | -- |
| Disturbed Wetland | -- | -- | -- | 0.81 | -- |
| Non-Vegetated Channel | -- | -- | -- | 0.35 | -- |
| Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest | -- | -- | -- | 9.37 | -- |
| Mule Fat Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 23.26 | -- |
| Southern Willow Scrub | -- | -- | -- | 14.26 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>--</i> | | <i>--</i> | <i>58.54</i> | <i>--</i> |
| Woodlands | | | | | |

| Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type | Impact Acreage | Mitigation Ratio ¹ | Required Mitigation Acreage | Acres Preserved ² | Off-site Mitigation Acreage |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Non-Native Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 1.02 | -- |
| Eucalyptus Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 16.10 | -- |
| Open Coast Live Oak Woodland | 0.07 | 3:1 | 0.21 | 20.51 | 0.21 |
| Dense Coast Live Oak Woodland | -- | -- | -- | 82.13 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>0.07</i> | | <i>0.21</i> | <i>119.75</i> | <i>0.21</i> |
| Other Land Cover Types | | | | | |
| Agriculture | -- | -- | -- | 17.88 | -- |
| Developed Lands | -- | -- | -- | 1.50 | -- |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | -- | | -- | <i>43.2592</i> | -- |
| Total | 5.76 | | 6.01 | 3,483.25 | 6.01 |

1 – These ratios are subject to change if the North County MSCP is approved prior to project implementation.

2 – Acreage within the Preserve not impacted as part of the proposed project does not count towards the necessary mitigation acreage for impacts to sensitive vegetation communities

B. Cultural Resources

1. Prior to any ground disturbing activities prescribed in the RMP and VMP, including fire management, invasive non-native plant removal efforts, and revegetation, the proposed area of activity will be reviewed for cultural resources. If cultural resources occur in the area, ground disturbing impacts in the area of the resource should be avoided, thereby fulfilling the management directives for cultural resources. To avoid impacts, the RMP and VMP generally stipulate the use of techniques that would not disturb the ground, such as passive habitat restoration and vegetation removal. If avoidance and non-destructive methods are infeasible, the affected resource should be evaluated for significance by a qualified archaeologist, per County guidelines.
2. Prior to the construction of any new trail segments or the proposed bridge, all of which were located to avoid cultural resources, the locations of new construction shall be field checked by a qualified archaeologist to ensure that they do indeed avoid known cultural resources. To avoid adverse impacts to P-37-030845 (County Survey Road 97), a federal, state and locally significant resource, a passive form of revegetation shall be adopted for restoration of the southern loop trail of County Survey Road 97.

For CA-SDI-1270, a resource located along the proposed east-west connector trail on non-Preserve land, the location of the site shall be confirmed in the field by a qualified archaeologist and the trail shall be rerouted if possible to avoid impacts. If avoidance is infeasible, the resource should be evaluated for significance by a qualified archaeologist, per County guidelines.

The location of the proposed viewing pavilion/kiosk in the NE portion of the Preserve shall be designed to avoid the one cultural resource in the area, CA-SDI-16628.

All trail signs, markers, fencing, and gates in the Preserve should be placed in areas that avoid known cultural resources. If this recommendation cannot be met, MM-4 shall be followed during installation.

3. Permanent split rail fencing with signage (e.g., signs that read "Please Stay on Trail") shall be placed along the trail route in the NW portion of the Preserve in the vicinity of CA-SDI-19558, a sensitive cultural resource identified by Native American representations. The fencing should be placed along that portion of the trail from which the site can be accessed. The purpose would be to protect the resource from unauthorized visitation.

4. All ground disturbing activity related to implementation of the project, including installation of trail signage, potential building removal, trenching, grading associated with trail installation, etc. shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and, where the resource involved is a prehistoric archaeological site, by a Native American representative. If cultural resources are discovered during monitoring, all work within 50 feet of the discovery shall stop until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find and make appropriate recommendations for treatment.
5. Any ground disturbing activities on the Preserve must be considered as having the potential to encounter Native American human remains. Human remains require special handling and must be treated with appropriate dignity. Specific actions must take place pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5e, Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98, and Section 87.429 of the County of San Diego Grading, Clearing and Watercourses Ordinance.

Should Native American human remains be identified during ground disturbing activities related to the project, whether during construction, maintenance, or any other activity as outlined in the RMP and VMP, state and county mandated procedures shall be followed for the treatment and disposition of those remains, as follows:

In the event of the accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, DPR will ensure that the following procedures are followed:

1. There shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until:
 - a. A County (DPR) official is contacted.
 - b. The County Coroner is contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required.
 - c. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American, then:
 - i. The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours.
 - ii. The NAHC shall identify the person or persons it believes to be most likely descended from the deceased Native American.
 - iii. The Most Likely Descendent (MLD) may make recommendations to the landowner (DPR), or the person

responsible for the excavation work, for the treatment of human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in PRC Section 5097.98.

2. Under the following conditions, the landowner or its authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance:
 - a. The NAHC is unable to identify a MLD or the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the NAHC.
 - b. The MLD fails to make a recommendation.
 - c. The landowner or his authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the MLD, and mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.
3. Any time human remains are encountered or suspected and soil conditions are appropriate for the technique, ground penetrating radar (GPR) will be used as part of the survey methodology. In addition, the use of canine forensics will be considered when searching for human remains. The decision to use GPR or canine forensics will be made on a case-by-case basis through consultation among the County Archaeologist, the project archaeologist, and the Native American monitor.
4. Because human remains require special consideration and handling, they must be defined in a broad sense. For the purposes of this document, human remains are defined as:
 - a. Cremations, including the soil surrounding the deposit.
 - b. Interments, including the soils surrounding the deposit.
 - c. Associated grave goods.

In consultation among the County archaeologist, project archaeologist, and Native American monitor, additional measures (e.g., wet-screening of soils adjacent to the deposit or on-site) may be required to determine the extent of the burial.

3. Critical Project Design Elements That Must Become Conditions of Approval:

While the management directives and implementation measures outlined in the Resource Management Plan and Vegetation Management Plan are technically not mitigation measures, the implementation of these plans must be assured to avoid potentially significant environmental effects. The

Resource Management Plan and Vegetation Management Plan are attached as part of this Mitigated Negative Declaration.

ADOPTION STATEMENT: This Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted and above California Environmental Quality Act findings made by the:

_____ (Decision-Making Body)

On _____ (Date/Item #)

Megan Hamilton, Group Program Manager
Department of Parks and Recreation



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BRIAN ALBRIGHT
DIRECTOR

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Fax: (858) 495-5841
Reservations: (858) 565-3600

November 8, 2011

(Based on the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G Rev. March, 2010)

1. Project Name/Number:

Ramona Grasslands Preserve

2. Lead agency name and address:

County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation
5500 Overland Drive, Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92123

3. a. Contact: Megan Hamilton, Group Program Manager

b. Phone number: (858) 966-1377

c. E-mail: Megan.Hamilton@sdcounty.ca.gov

4. Project Location:

The project is located approximately 6.0 miles east of Interstate 15 (I-15), 1.5 miles north of State Route 78 (SR-78), and 2.0 miles west of downtown Ramona in unincorporated San Diego County (see attached Figures 1 through 3). The project is primarily just west of the Ramona Airport and east and north of Highland Valley Road. The project is within the western portion of the Valle de Pamo (or Santa Maria Valley, T 13S, R 1E and R 1W), part of the historic Santa Maria Rancho,

The Project's 3,490 acres are divided into four distinct portions:

- The northwest (NW) portion is bounded to the south by an unpaved road and RMWD land, and by rural residential development and open space along its other boundaries.

- The southwest(SW) portion is bounded to the south by Highland Valley Road, west by rural residential development, northeast by Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) land, and east by Rangeland Road.
- The northeast (NE) portion is bounded to the south by the Ramona Airport, west by RMWD land and rural residential development, north by rural residential development, and east by planned residential development and associated proposed open space.
 - The southeast (SE) portion is bounded to the south primarily by rural residential development, west by Rangeland Road and the SW portion of the Preserve, north by RMWD land and the Ramona Airport.

Thomas Brothers Coordinates: Pages 1151, 1152, 1171, and 1172 (spans multiple grids)

5. Project Applicant name and address:

County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation
5500 Overland Drive, Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92123

6. General Plan Designation

(18) Multiple Rural Use
(19) Intensive Agriculture
(20) General Agriculture
(21) Specific Plan Area
(22) Public/Semi-Public

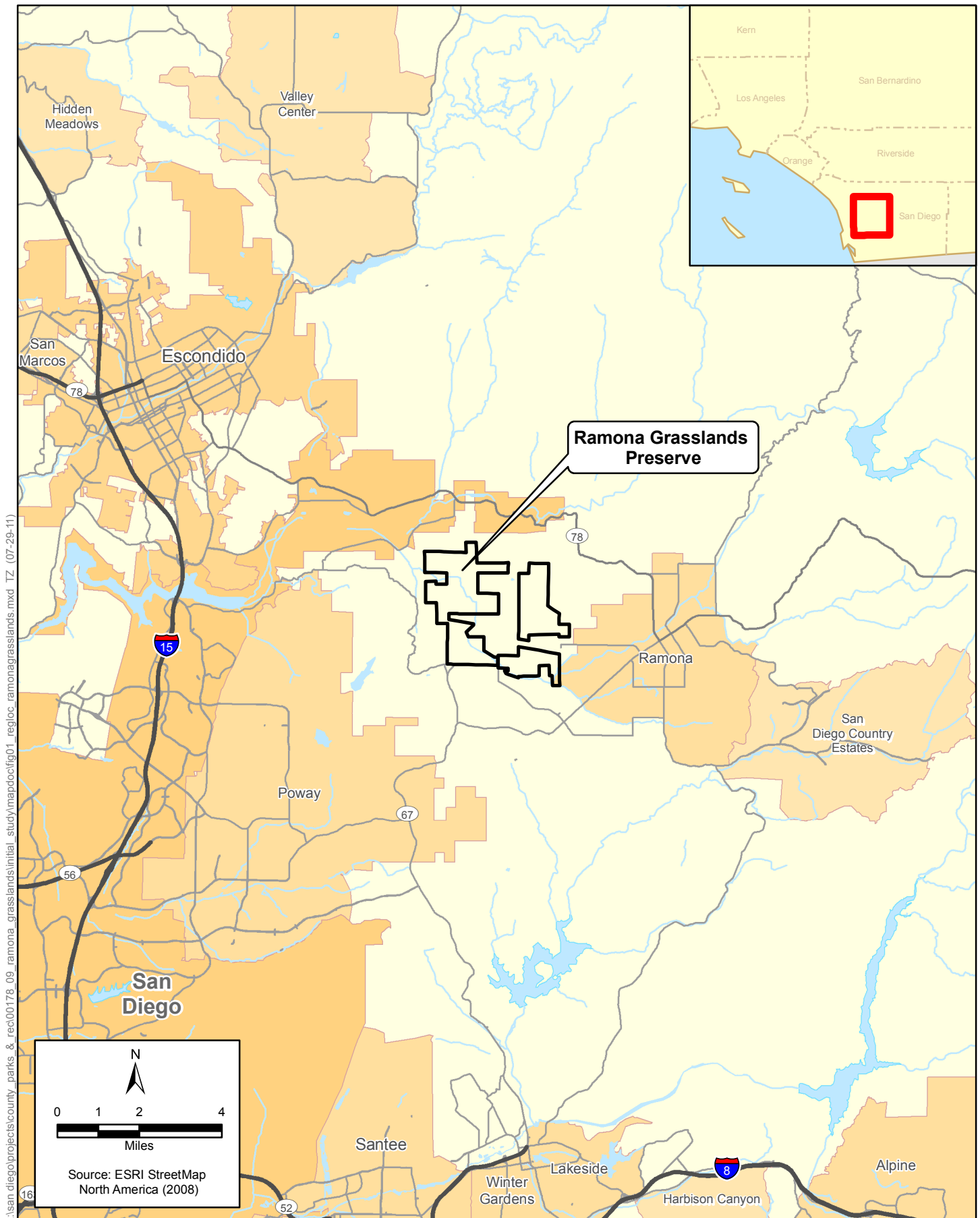
7. Zoning

(S88) Specific Planning Area
(A70) Limited Agricultural Use

8. Description of Project:

The proposed Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project (Project) would provide resource management and recreational use improvements to enhance the existing Ramona Grasslands Preserve (Preserve). The 3,490-acre Preserve was acquired in sections starting in 2003. The Preserve is operated, administered, and managed by the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

The project has four components including implementation of the management directives identified in the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Resource Management Plan (RMP)(ICF 2011a; provided as an attachment to



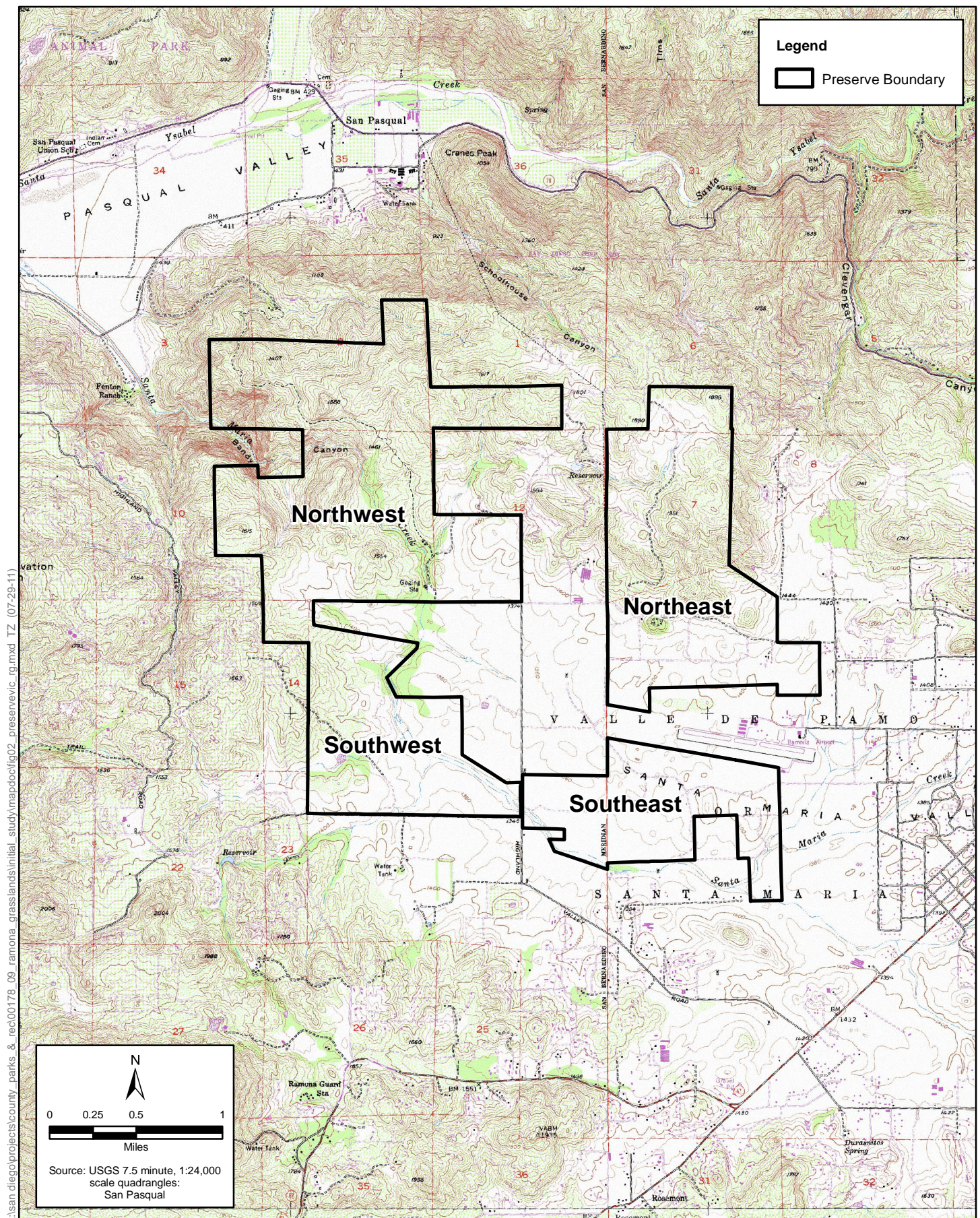


Figure 2
Preserve Vicinity

Initial Study for Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project

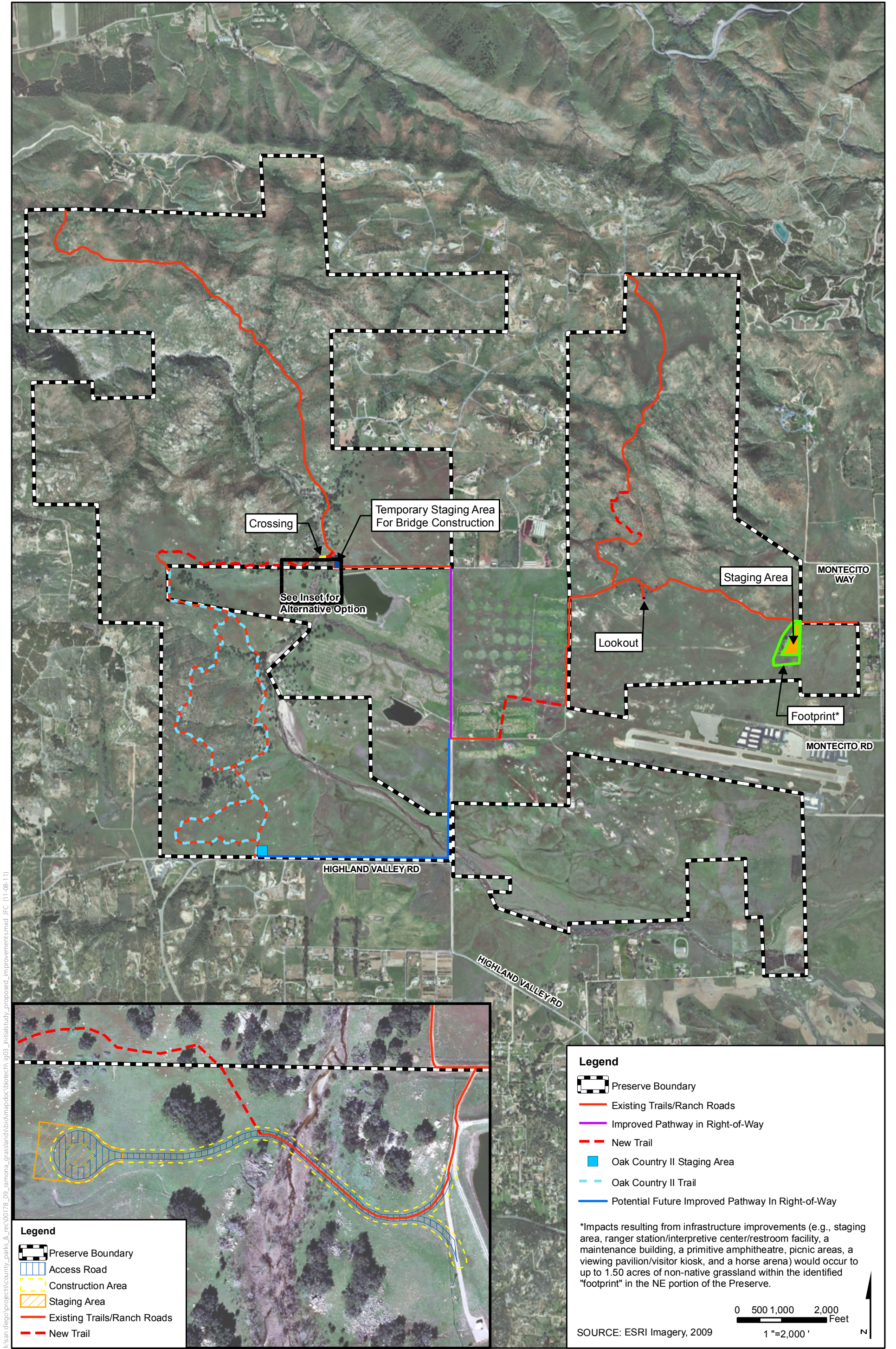


Figure 3
Proposed Trails and Infrastructure Improvements
Initial Study for Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project

this report) and the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Vegetation Management Plan (VMP)(ICF 2011b; provided as an attachment to this report); establishment of a multi-use trail system within the Preserve consistent with the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Public Access Plan (PAP)(WRT 2010); and construction of supporting infrastructure improvements. The RMP and VMP have both been developed by DPR to guide the management and preservation of biological and cultural resources within the Preserve. Each of these four project components is discussed in more detail below.

Resource Management Plan

The proposed RMP provides Area-Specific Management Directives (ASMDs) that is anticipated to meet the requirements of the Draft North County MSCP Plan (County 2011) and the associated Draft North County MSCP Framework Resource Management Plan (County 2011). Specifically, the RMP establishes baseline conditions from which adaptive management will be determined and success will be measured; guides the management and monitoring of biological and cultural resources to protect and enhance their values; serves as a guide for appropriate onsite public uses; and provides an overview of the operation and maintenance requirements to implement management goals.

The RMP includes management directives and implementation measures to meet MSCP goals and objectives under the following elements: A) Biological Resources; B) Vegetation Management; C) Public Use, Trails, and Recreation; D) Operations and Facility Maintenance; and E) Cultural Resources. Specific management directives are listed below. Detailed implementation measures associated with each management directive can be found in the RMP. Specific implementation measures that may result in physical environmental effects are identified below and discussed in more detail throughout this Initial Study as appropriate.

Biological Resources

The following management directives focus on biological monitoring; South and Draft North County MSCP covered species-specific monitoring and management; non-native invasive wildlife species control; and future research.

Management Directive A.1 – Conduct habitat monitoring to ensure MSCP goals and DPR objectives are met.

Management Directive A.2 – Meet the corridor monitoring requirements of the MSCP.

Management Directive A.3 – Provide for management and monitoring of Draft North County MSCP and South County MSCP covered species and County Group A and B plant species.

Management Directive A.4 – Reduce, control, or where feasible eradicate invasive, non-native fauna known to be detrimental to native species and/or the local ecosystem.

Management Directive A.5 – Allow for future research opportunities for the academic and professional scientific and biologic activities within the Preserve.

Management Directives A.1, A.2, A.4, and A.5 would not result in any physical environmental effects because associated implementation measures would be limited to monitoring and survey activities, trapping and removal of invasive wildlife species (a beneficial effect), equestrian education, and allowance of future research consistent with the RMP. Therefore, these directives are not discussed further in this Initial Study.

Implementation of Management Directive A.3 would include habitat management measures such as invasive non-native plant species control, grazing, habitat restoration, and fire control/threat reduction to maintain desired habitat qualities in the Preserve for special-status species. Therefore, physical environmental effects associated with this directive are considered further in this Initial Study.

Vegetation Management

The following management directives focus on habitat restoration and enhancement; invasive non-native plant species removal and control; fire prevention, control, and management; and grazing.

Management Directive B.1 – Restore degraded habitats to protect and enhance populations of rare and sensitive species through stabilization of eroded lands and strategic revegetation.

Management Directive B.2 – Reduce, control, or where feasible eradicate invasive, non-native flora known to be detrimental to native species and/or the local ecosystem.

Management Directive B.3 – Manage and minimize the expansion of invasive, non-native flora within the Preserve.

Management Directive B.4 – Provide for necessary fire management activities that are sensitive to natural and cultural resources protection.

Management Directive B.5 – Implement grazing regime within the Preserve to maintain and enhance biological resources.

Management Directive B.3 would not result in any physical environmental effects because associated implementation measures would be limited to education programs for visitors, adjacent residents, and equestrian users of

the Preserve. Therefore, this directive is not discussed further in this Initial Study.

Implementation of Management Directives B.1, B.2, B.4, and B.5 would include habitat restoration activities, active treatment prescriptions for diseases and pests, invasive non-native plant species control, grazing management, fire control/threat reduction (i.e., fuel modification zones and defensible spaces), and road/trail/emergency access maintenance. Therefore, physical environmental effects associated with these directives are considered further in this Initial Study.

Public Use, Trails, and Recreation

The following management directives focus on public access; fencing and gates; trail and access road maintenance; and signage and lighting.

- Management Directive C.1 – Limit types of public uses to those that are appropriate for the site.
- Management Directive C.2 – Manage public access in sensitive biological and cultural resource areas within the Preserve.
- Management Directive C.3 – Provide appropriate interpretive and educational materials.
- Management Directive C.4 – Install and maintain fencing and gates within the Preserve.
- Management Directive C.5 – Properly maintain trails for user safety, to protect natural and cultural resources, and to provide high-quality user experiences.
- Management Directive C.6 – Develop, install, and maintain appropriate signage to effectively communicate important information to Preserve visitors.

Management Directives C.1, C.2, and C.6 would not result in any physical environmental effects because associated implementation measures would be limited to identification of prohibited uses, monitoring the number and type of trail users, and placement and maintenance of appropriate signage. Therefore, these directives are not discussed further in this Initial Study.

Implementation of Management Directives C.3, C.4, and C.5 would include installation of educational kiosks, fence maintenance and installation, trail repair and maintenance, and habitat restoration of trail edge effects. Therefore, physical environmental effects associated with these directives are considered further in this Initial Study.

Operations and Facility Maintenance

The following management directives focus on litter/trash and material storage; hydrological management; emergency, safety, and police services; and adjacent management issues.

- Management Directive D.1 – Maintain a safe and healthy environment for Preserve users.
- Management Directive D.2 – Publicize and enforce regulations regarding littering/dumping.
- Management Directive D.3 – Retain Santa Maria Creek in its natural condition.
- Management Directive D.4 – Monitor Santa Maria Creek box culvert under Rangeland Road.
- Management Directive D.5 – Retain un-named tributaries to the Santa Maria Creek in their natural condition.
- Management Directive D.6 – Watershed education to promote water quality and water sustainability.
- Management Directive D.7 – Ensure the effectiveness of the existing earthen dam in the southwest portion of the Preserve.
- Management Directive D.8 – Maintain or increase the ability of emergency response personnel to deal with emergencies within the Preserve or vicinity.
- Management Directive D.9 – Maintain emergency evacuation route for the public to use in the event of an emergency.
- Management Directive D.10 – Provide for a safe recreational experience for Preserve visitors.
- Management Directive D.11 – Coordinate with adjacent land managers with large areas of undeveloped land.
- Management Directive D.12 – Enforce Preserve boundaries.
- Management Directive D.13 – Educate residents of surrounding areas regarding adjacency issues.

Management Directives D.1, D.2, D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.7, D.8, D.10, D.11, D.12, and D.13 would not result in any physical environmental effects because associated implementation measures would be limited to identification of restrictions for temporary storage of toxic materials and prohibition of permanent storage, litter monitoring and enforcement, fence installation and maintenance, culvert inspection, avoidance and protection of unnamed tributaries, interpretive signage, provision of accessibility for law enforcement and emergency agencies, coordination with adjacent land managers, enforcement of Preserve boundaries and removal of intrusions, and environmental education for local residents. Therefore, these directives are not discussed further in this Initial Study.

Implementation of Management Directive D.9 would include maintenance mowing for the emergency access route. Therefore, physical environmental effects to biological resources and cultural resources associated with this directive is considered further in this Initial Study.

Cultural Resources

The following management directives focus on long-term preservation of cultural resources in the Preserve; opportunities for public interpretation; and opportunities for interaction with the Native American groups whose traditional territories encompass all or part of the Preserve.

Management Directive E.1 – Identify, record, and assess the significance of cultural resources within the Preserve in areas over 20 percent slope.

Management Directive E.2 – Preserve and protect significant cultural resources to ensure that sites are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.

Management Directive E.3 – Promote the beneficial uses of cultural resources through interpretation and educational programs.

Management Directive E.4 – Honor Native American Heritage and promote Native American ceremonies, gathering, and cultural practices.

Management Directive E.5 – Develop and implement proper protocols in the event that Native American human remains are found during grading, brush removal, or other construction and maintenance activities.

Management Directives E.1, E.3, and E.4 would not result in any physical environmental effects because associated implementation measures would be limited to identification and recordation of previously unidentified cultural resources in unsurveyed areas should appropriate site conditions exist (i.e., ground visibility), public interpretation and education, and coordination with local tribes, and allowance of traditional tribal uses. Therefore, these directives are not discussed further in this Initial Study.

Implementation of Management Directive E.2 would include identification and potential mitigation of threats to cultural resources resulting from Preserve management actions. Therefore, physical environmental effects associated with this directive are considered further in this Initial Study. Implementation of Management Directive E.5 would include conditions for the treatment and handling of human remains. The cultural resource effects associated with this directive are considered further in this Initial Study.

Preserve Vegetation Management Plan

Similar to the RMP, the VMP provides management guidance through specific and adaptive management practices with its focus on the vegetative resources within the Preserve. The VMP will enhance appropriate habitat for native target species through removal and control of invasive non-native

species; provide a framework for the restoration of closed trails within the Preserve; provide a fire management strategy that plans for wildland fires; and provide a grazing management plan based on historic, current, and proposed grazing practices.

The VMP includes management directives under the following elements: invasive non-native species management; habitat restoration; grazing; and fire management.

Invasive Non-native Species Management

Directives for invasive non-native plant species management focus primarily on the control of tamarisk (*Tamarisk ramosissima*), giant reed (*Arundo donax*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), as well as other targeted invasive non-native plant species found within the Preserve. Invasive non-native species management includes annual inspections of all previously infested Preserve areas and to document newly infested areas, followed by treatment (i.e., hand or mechanical removal and disposal, herbicide treatment, prescribed fire or grazing in grasslands) of individual invasive non-native plants prior to flowering and seed set. Treated areas would be monitored to ensure effectiveness of treatment efforts.

Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration directives support reestablishment of areas of the Preserve through natural processes (i.e., passive restoration) to the extent feasible. Active restoration activities would only occur following landscape changing disturbances that remove, damage, degrade, or alter the desired native habitats. Active restoration methods would be tailored to the type of disturbance and would require preparation of a detailed restoration plan. Management directives for habitat restoration include monitoring of invasive non-native plant species removal sites to ensure passive natural recruitment is successful; monitoring habitat quality for sensitive wildlife species to determine if active restoration is necessary to return habitats to pre-fire habitat quality; and monitoring for the presence of disease or pest levels to determine outbreaks and prescribe appropriate treatment.

Grazing

Management directives related to grazing include 1) maintaining the condition of loamy grassland habitats suitable for species such as Stephens' kangaroo rat and raptors to ensure long-term persistence of these species; and 2) decreasing the cover of invasive non-native annual grasses and forbs and the amount of thatch in the vernal pools to improve vernal pool functions.

Fire Management

Management directives related to fire management focus on the cooperation between Cal Fire, the Ramona Fire Department, and DPR for maintaining a safe fire environment at the Preserve. These directives include providing Cal Fire and the Ramona Fire Department with guidance regarding the natural resource and cultural values at risk during wildfires that threaten the Preserve; minimizing the disturbance of natural and cultural resources during fire suppression on the Preserve when feasible; providing defensible space within the Preserve adjacent to improvements through fuel modification zones; and limiting public access to the Preserve during periods of high wildland fire danger using methods such as seasonal closures; and limit potential of wildfires by posting no smoking signs.

Public Access Plan

An approximately 12.4-mile multi-use trail system for hiking, biking, and equestrian users will be established connecting the four portions of the Preserve consistent with the Preserve PAP recommendations (Figure 3, Table 1). The trail system would utilize existing ranch roads and trails to the greatest possible extent, with some new trail construction and a crossing of Santa Maria Creek to increase connectivity in the Preserve. The plan also involves an alternative route that would utilize a road and bridge crossing on RMWD property, proposed to be constructed by RMWD in association with their yet to be approved Santa Maria Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion project. If this alternative is chosen, DPR would be required to construct a short trail segment on RMWD land to connect to the road and bridge. Approximately ten (10) miles of the proposed trail system already exists in the form of 4-10 foot wide dirt roads that either remain from prior ranching activity or were recently constructed as part of the previously approved Oak Country II Trails Project. New trail connections would be constructed in the NW and NE portions of the Preserve.

Table 1. Proposed Trails and Pathways

| Location | Trail Segment | Trail/Pathway Miles | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| | | Existing | New | Total |
| SW | Oak Country II Trail | 3.8 | 0.0 | 3.8 |
| | SW Trail Total | 3.8 | | 3.8 |
| NW | Old Survey Road 97 and public road easement connection from Rangeland Road | 2.9 | 0.0 | |
| | NW – SW Connector and Proposed Creek Crossing | 0.0 | 1.4 | |
| | NW Trail Total | 2.9 | 1.4 | 4.3 |
| NE | East-West Segment and North-South Segment | 2.9 | 0.0 | |
| | Re-alignment along North-South Segment | 0.0 | 0.3 | |
| | Trail Segment east of Proposed Staging Area | 0.2 | 0.0 | |
| | Easement connection to Rangeland Road | 0.5 | 0.4 | |
| | NE Trail Total | 3.6 | 0.7 | 4.3 |
| | Total Trails for the Preserve | 10.3 | 2.1 | 12.4 |
| Pathways | Proposed Rangeland Road Pathway (from NW Portion south to Easement Connection with NE Portion) | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| | Potential Future Highland Valley Road Pathway Including Rangeland Road Pathway south of Easement Connection with NE Portion | 0.0 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| | Pathway Total | 0.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |

Proposed trails and pathways are described below for each portion of the Preserve.

Trail and Pathway Alignments

Southwest Portion

Public access in this portion of the Preserve is provided by the previously approved and recently constructed Oak Country II trails, comprising approximately four miles of trails in two connected loops. The Oak Country II trail project includes a staging area off Highland Valley Road with two shaded picnic areas, ten vehicle parking spaces with overflow room and pull-through parking for four vehicles towing trailers. No additional trail improvements are proposed at the SW portion as part of this project, with the exception of the connection to the NW portion discussed below.

Northwest Portion

Approximately three miles of trails are proposed for this portion of the Preserve, including about 2.35 miles that trace part of Old Survey Road 97. Construction of a new 1.4-mile trail segment will connect the southern end of Old Survey Road 97 with the Oak Country II trails in the SW portion of the Preserve. This connection would necessitate crossing Santa Maria Creek (see discussion below).

Near the northwest corner of the NW portion of the Preserve, the existing Old Survey Road 97 splits into a southern and northern route. The southern route would be closed and passively restored as habitat.

Access to the proposed trail in this portion of the Preserve from the east is via a 0.5-mile public road easement (i.e., unpaved road) that lies between the NW portion of the Preserve and RMWD property. This unpaved road intersects with the proposed pathway along Rangeland Road. There would be no provisions for vehicle parking at this location. This trail access point would include a kiosk for visitor orientation and general information.

Access would primarily occur via a proposed new trail segment connecting with the Oak Country II trails in the SW portion of the Preserve. Visitors would be able to reach this access point by using the existing Oak Country II staging area.

Public access in the NW portion of the Preserve includes a proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek, which initially would be a dry weather crossing. At some point in time, an all-weather structural crossing (e.g., bridge) would be constructed for pedestrian, cyclist, and equestrian use. The structural crossing would have a maximum width of 12 feet and would consist of non-slip and all-weather materials consistent with the guidelines from the Community Trails Master Plan (San Diego County 2005; updated in 2009). The structural crossing would be designed with sufficient length to span Santa Maria Creek with little to no direct impacts to federal and state jurisdictional waters or wetlands. A temporary construction staging area would be established during bridge construction. Approximately 4.3 miles of trails are proposed for this portion of the Preserve, consisting of existing unpaved ranch roads and trails and new trail construction.

An alternative to the proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek discussed above is to utilize a crossing proposed to be constructed by the Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) on their property associated with their yet to be approved Santa Maria Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion project. The proposed crossing is located immediately south of the northwest portion of the Preserve. This alternative would require permission from RMWD and could be utilized after RMWD constructs the proposed crossing.

Northeast Portion

Primary access to the proposed trails in the NE portion is from the east, which can be reached via an unpaved unnamed road extending west from Montecito Way. A new staging area would be constructed directly east of a vacant house with associated barn and rodeo corral. The staging area would be approximately three acres in size and would include visitor parking for 30 cars and 18 vehicles with horse trailers with room for overflow parking, hitching rails, an informational kiosk, trash receptacles, bathrooms, and picnic tables or benches. Secondary access would occur from Rangeland Road via a 1-mile public access easement (i.e., unpaved road) through RMWD property. This access route utilizes a portion of an existing unpaved road, but would also require 0.4 mile of new trail construction where the easement is adjacent to the Ramona Airport property. Signage and fencing would be installed to keep visitors on the trail and off RMWD and Ramona Airport properties.

Trails proposed in the NE portion of the Preserve would follow existing ranch roads and trails, with the exception of an approximately 0.3-mile long section where the proposed trail will deviate from the existing road/trail to avoid public access within sight of a rocky outcrop frequently used by foraging raptors, in addition to rerouting to avoid a severely eroded section. The new trail will loop around the west side of a small hill and then reconnect with the existing road/trail.

Southeast Portion

Because of existing deed restrictions and sensitive resources throughout the SE portion of the Preserve, most of this area is unavailable for public access. However, the southeastern tip (the former Hardy Ranch property) allows for connection to a future trail system associated with the proposed Cumming Ranch Development adjacent to the Preserve. If the Cumming Ranch Development, including trails, moves forward, there would be an approximately 0.3-mile trail connector segment within the SE portion. This segment is included in the Cumming Ranch Development Draft EIR and is not a part of this project, and therefore is not analyzed in this report.

Pathway

In addition to new trails, pathways are proposed along Highland Valley and Rangeland Roads located between the road paving and existing fencing within the right-of-way, with the pathway route as far from vehicle travel lanes as possible. Combined, the pathways total about two (2) miles in length. The northern 0.7-mile segment of the Rangeland Road pathway is proposed to be constructed. The Highland Valley Road pathway and the southern section of the Rangeland Road pathway may be constructed in the future. The Highland Valley Road pathway is approximately 0.8 mile and would be located on the

north side of the road, so that users are adjacent to the Preserve boundary and on the same side of the road as the Oak Country II staging area. The Rangeland Road pathway is approximately 1.2 miles and would be located on the west side of the road. The location of the pathway on the west side of Rangeland Road would necessitate trail crossing signage for trail users to cross Rangeland Road to reach the access point to the NE portion of the Preserve (via the RMWD easement).

Trail and Pathway Design

Existing Ranch Roads and Trails

Existing ranch roads that are currently used for vehicle access would be maintained to their current width.

In the NW portion, the southern portion of Old Survey Route 97 off of the 0.5-mile road easement would be maintained at its current width of approximately 15 feet for vehicle access for approximately one mile. The remainder of this road would be maintained to a trail width of four feet.

In the NE portion, the existing east-west ranch road would be maintained to its current width as needed for vehicle access. The existing dirt road that extends north-south to the northern property boundary would be maintained to four (4) feet wide. Any new trail realignments to avoid eroded sections of the existing north-south dirt road would also be four (4) feet wide. Eroded sections of trails would be passively revegetated.

In the SE portion, the existing dirt road/trail in this area would be maintained to four (4) feet wide.

New Trails

Construction of new trails within the Preserve would meet the guidelines in the Ramona Community Trails and Pathways Plan and Community Trails Master Plan for Type C (Primitive) trails including four-foot tread width consisting of natural surface material, with brush management requirements of one foot on either side. The new trail segment associated with the RMWD public access easement that connects the northeast portion of the Preserve with Rangeland Road would follow the guidelines for Type C trails, except that it would be constructed the same width as the existing dirt road that it connects to (approximately ten feet wide).

New Pathways

Construction of the new pathways along Highland Valley Road and Rangeland Road would meet the guidelines in the Community Trails Master

Plan for Type D pathways including 10-12 feet tread width consisting of decomposed granite, with brush management requirements only at the edge of the pathways.

Trail Use

Based on known trail usage at the California Department of Fish and Game's Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, a 5,000 acre Preserve which contains approximately 19 miles of double-track trails and an additional 2.4 miles of single-track trails open to public uses, anticipated trail usage at the Preserve is estimated to consist of no more than the following:

- 10-15 equestrian users per day during the week and 15-25 on weekend days,
- 5-10 hikers per day during the week and 20 on weekend days, and
- 5 mountain bikers per day during the week and 10 on weekend days.

Trail and Pathway Maintenance

Trails

Trails would be maintained at or near their original or intended standards, and includes various activities to keep trails in a safe, usable condition. Consistent with the RMP management directives, periodic assessments of trail conditions would be conducted to address surface material, drainage, vegetation clearing, signage, fencing, barriers and any necessary repairs. Trail maintenance activities would include mowing and brush removal, replacement of damaged signs, trail reconstruction and erosion control and stabilization.

Unauthorized trails will be blocked or covered with brush to camouflage them in order to discourage use, allow for revegetation and to protect sensitive habitats. Temporary trail closure may be necessary during maintenance. The trails would be marked with a temporary closed sign to ensure user safety.

Pathways

The San Diego County Department of Public Works (DPW) would be responsible for maintenance of designated pathways and would coordinate the maintenance with similar road maintenance activities involving clearing, grading, weed control, and maintenance of drainage control facilities. Pathway maintenance would include:

- Keeping the pathway free of weeds, brush, rocks, or other obstructions.
- Trimming trees and other vegetation to maintain a minimum vertical (overhead) clearance of 10 feet.

- Repairing erosion in a timely manner by grading, placement of new base material, or installing engineered drainage controls.

Other Infrastructure Improvements

Additional new infrastructure associated with the project includes a staging area, ranger station/interpretive center/restroom facility, a maintenance building, a primitive amphitheatre, picnic areas, a viewing pavilion/visitor kiosk, utility trenching, a horse arena, and two volunteer pads all proposed in the NE portion of the Preserve. These improvements would be open to the public between 8:00 am and sunset (variable from 5:00-8:00 pm). Each of these infrastructure improvements is described below:

Ranger Station/Interpretive/Restroom Facility

The existing house located southwest of an unpaved road extending west from Montecito Way would be refurbished or replaced to serve as a new ranger station/interpretive/restroom facility that meets federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) accessibility guidelines. A two-space ADA accessible parking lot constructed of decomposed granite would be located adjacent to the house to provide parking for DPR staff. Nighttime security motion sensor lighting would be installed on the building.

Maintenance Building

The existing barn structure would be removed and replaced by an approximate 40 foot X 30 foot x 12 foot tall prefab metal maintenance building placed on concrete foundation. Nighttime security motion sensor lighting would be installed on the maintenance building. No hazardous materials would be stored onsite.

Amphitheatre

A primitive amphitheatre would be constructed northeast of the proposed maintenance building and would consist of a 0.1 acre area with decomposed granite as the substrate and wooden bench seating in a semi-circle for up to 35 people. The amphitheatre would be ADA accessible. The amphitheatre would be used mostly for classroom education activities.

Picnic Areas

Two shaded picnic area structures (each approximately 10 feet X 20 feet) would be constructed near the amphitheater. Another shaded picnic area structure (10 feet X 20 feet) would be constructed north of the proposed horse arena. These structures would be unpaved.

Visitor Kiosk/Pavilion

A viewing pavilion and visitor kiosk, approximately 10 feet X 30 feet with a semi-shaded trellis structure would be constructed on the hill in the vicinity of

the existing residence and within existing disturbed/developed areas. The visitor kiosk would be accessible by pedestrian traffic only.

Utility Trenching

Trenching of an existing water line would be completed to allow for a new water pipeline to be routed serving the existing residence on the hill, which is proposed as a potential ranger residence/interpretive center. Trenching would originate at the previous trailer home location west of the existing residence.

Horse Riding Arena

The project would also include restoration of the existing rodeo corral to a horse riding arena, located south of the proposed staging area. DPR would enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with the Ramona Trails Association (RTA) where the County owns the property and maintains the connecting trails, and the RTA operates and maintains the horse riding arena. The refurbished arena would measure 130 by 317 feet, operate during Preserve hours, and vary in usage from 5-10 users per day on weekdays and 10-25 on weekends. The concrete blocks and metal and wood debris associated with the existing rodeo corral area onsite would be removed as part of the DPR initial stewardship and land maintenance.

Volunteer Pads

Two volunteer pads would be constructed in the NE portion of the Preserve. Each pad will be approximately 100 feet X 100 feet, constructed with gravel, and include electrical and gas hook-up, water, and sewer. Utilities will connect to existing facilities at the site. The first pad will be constructed on the west side of the existing residence located at 944 Montecito Way and the second pad will be constructed on the west side of the existing residence located at 942 Montecito Way.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The project area is within the Santa Maria Valley, which consists of a broad basin surrounded by gentle hills and rocky rises ranging in elevation from approximately 1,350 feet (ft) above mean sea level (AMSL) along the valley floor, to over 1,700 ft AMSL in the rocky hills of the northern sections of the Preserve. The Preserve consists of very high to high value natural communities including a large portion of Santa Maria Creek within the western and southern portions of the Preserve. Rangeland Road runs north/south to the west of the NE portion of the Preserve and continues north providing vehicular access to a private gated residential development that borders the northern portion of the Preserve. Several other residential properties exist on all sides of the Preserve. Other surrounding properties

include the RMWD, which is located west of Rangeland Road and is bordered by the Preserve to the north, south, and west. Ranch land exists east of Rangeland Road and is bordered by the Preserve to the east and south. The Ramona Airport exists east of Rangeland Road and borders the Preserve to the north and south. Other areas around the periphery of the Preserve are used for dry farming, and small citrus and avocado orchards. Additionally, two new residential communities are planned adjacent to the Preserve, both including open space areas that are proposed to be conserved as project mitigation.

The NW portion of the Preserve is characterized by rocky hills bisected by Bandy Canyon, through which the Santa Maria Creek flows. The SW portion consists of rolling hills with rocky outcrops with areas of oak woodlands and grasslands. The NE portion is characterized by rocky chaparral-covered hillsides and grasslands. The SE portion of the Preserve consists of rolling hills supporting grassland and rocky outcrops. The Santa Maria Creek channel follows the southern boundary in this area.

Several gates along or near Rangeland, Montecito, and Highland Valley Roads provide access to the Preserve.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):

| Permit Type/Action | Agency |
|---|--|
| Biological Opinion | US Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Section 404 Nationwide Permit | US Army Corps of Engineers |
| Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement | CA Dept. of Fish and Game |
| Section 401 Water Quality Certification | San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board |

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project and involve at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or a "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Aesthetics</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Agriculture and Forest Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Air Quality</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Biological Resources</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Cultural Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Geology & Soils</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Hazards & Haz. Materials</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Hydrology & Water Quality</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Land Use & Planning</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mineral Resources</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Noise</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Population & Housing</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Public Services</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Recreation</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Transportation/Traffic</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Utilities & Service Systems</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Mandatory Findings of Significance</u> |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)
On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ On the basis of this Initial Study, the Department of Parks and Recreation finds that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ On the basis of this Initial Study, the Department of Parks and Recreation finds that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ On the basis of this Initial Study, the Department of Parks and Recreation finds that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.



Signature

Megan Hamilton

Printed Name

11/17/11

Date

Group Program Manager

Title

INSTRUCTIONS ON EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Scenic vistas often refer to views of natural lands, but may also be compositions of natural and developed areas, or even entirely of developed and unnatural areas, such as a scenic vista of a rural town and surrounding agricultural lands. What is scenic to one person may not be scenic to another, so the assessment of what constitutes a scenic vista must consider the perceptions of a variety of viewer groups.

The items that can be seen within a vista are visual resources. Adverse impacts to individual visual resources or the addition of structures or developed areas may or may not adversely affect the vista. Determining the level of impact to a scenic vista requires analyzing the changes to the vista as a whole and also to individual visual resources.

Less than Significant Impact: The proposed project is located near or within the viewshed of a scenic vista. The viewshed and visible components of the landscape within the viewshed, including the underlying landform and overlaying land cover, establish the visual environment for the scenic vista. The visual environment of the subject scenic vista extends across the Santa Maria Valley from Santa Maria Creek to the north and from Montecito Way to the west. The project site comprises a broad basin surrounded by gentle hills and rocky rises vegetated with grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and oak woodlands. Santa Maria Creek generally parallels the project site's southern and western boundary, entering the southeast corner of the property, near the intersection of Sawday Street and Howell Street.

The project site itself is partially developed with two existing residences, a barn structure, fences, gates, and non-designated dirt trails. Also, areas to the north, south, east, and west are developed with single-family residences. Other surrounding properties include RMWD land, which is located east and west of Rangeland Road and is bordered by the project site to the north, south, east, and west. The Ramona Airport exists east of Rangeland Road and borders the project site to the north and south. Other areas around the periphery of the project site are used for dry farming, and small citrus and avocado orchards. Additionally, two new residential communities (Montecito Ranch and Cumming Ranch) are planned adjacent to the project site, both including open space areas adjacent to the Preserve that are proposed to be conserved as project mitigation.

Implementation of RMP and VMP Management Directives

Habitat restoration, invasive species control, and fire control/threat reduction activities would result in a visually altered landscape. Habitats in this locations may be thinned, mowed, or replanted, and would appear less densely vegetated than adjacent unaltered habitats. In most instances, this visual condition would be temporary and minor as planted materials and existing native vegetation grow and fill in treated areas. Fuel modification zones adjacent to existing residential development or habitable onsite structures would be permanently maintained at a reduced density of shrubby woody plants; however, these areas would still be vegetated. None of these circumstances would alter the landscape in such a way as to result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista as native vegetation would remain or be replaced, and no blockages of views would result.

Multi-Use Trail System

The project would develop a multi-use trail system through the rocky hilly terrain in the northwestern portion of the project site and rolling hilly terrain predominantly consisting of grassland and rock outcrops in the southeastern portion of the project site. A small bridge crossing over Santa Maria Creek would also be constructed in the northwest portion. The trail system would consist of existing dirt ranch roads and newly constructed trails that would connect the existing trail segments together, ultimately offering trail access throughout the entire project site. Additional amenities would include trail signage and trailhead informational kiosks. Neither the bridge nor the new trails would be highly visible or detract from the scenic quality of the Preserve due to the presence and visual dominance of surrounding vegetation; therefore, the multi-use trail system would not result in substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Northeast Portion Infrastructure Improvements

The proposed new ranger station/interpretive facility would either be located in the renovated vacant residence or in a new replacement building of comparable size and scale to the existing onsite residence. The proposed new maintenance building would be smaller in size than the existing barn structure it would replace. The staging area east of the ranger station/interpretive facility, which would include parking, hitching rails, informational kiosks, trash receptacles, bathrooms, and picnic tables or benches, would be located directly east of the proposed ranger station and would not block scenic views to the hills. The riding arena, volunteer pads, and the primitive amphitheatre are proposed in the vicinity of the staging area and proposed ranger station and also would not block scenic views to the hills.

Although the viewing pavilion/visitor's kiosk would be constructed on a hill in the northeastern portion of the project site, it would consist of a platform

structure with a semi-shaded trellis and would be in the vicinity of the existing vacant onsite residence on the hill; thus, it would not obstruct existing views of the hillside.

These structural improvements would be low-density, low-scale developments that would be comparable in size and scale to the existing onsite residences and barn as well as surrounding development. Thus, none of the new buildings or structures would have the vertical height or horizontal mass to obscure scenic views of the nearby or distant hillsides.

The proposed project is compatible with the existing visual environment in terms of visual character and quality for the following reasons: (1) habitat restoration, fire control/threat reduction measures, and construction of the staging areas, trails, buildings, and structures would not result in a substantial modification of the existing landform, substantial amounts of grading, or the creation of visually prominent cut and fill slopes, and (2) no substantial blockage of views would result from the construction of the staging area, trails, buildings, or structures. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: State scenic highways refer to those highways that are officially designated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as scenic (Caltrans-California Scenic Highway Program). Generally, the area defined within a State scenic highway is the land adjacent to and visible from the vehicular right-of-way. There are no scenic highways designated within the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have any substantial adverse effect on a scenic resource within a State scenic highway.

- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Visual character is the objective composition of the visible landscape within a viewshed. Visual character is based on the organization of the pattern elements line, form, color, and texture. Visual character is commonly discussed in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity. Visual quality is the viewer's perception of the visual environment and varies based on exposure, sensitivity, and expectation of the viewers. The existing visual character and quality of the project site and surrounding area varies from open space and agricultural lands to spaced rural residential/single-family development with associated barns, fences, and other grazing/agricultural infrastructure as well as industrial uses associated with the Ramona Airport. The northwestern portion of the project site is characterized by rocky hills bisected by Bandy Canyon, through which Santa Maria Creek flows, the southwest area consists of rolling hills with rocky outcrops with areas of oak woodlands and grasslands, the northeast area is characterized by rocky chaparral-covered hillsides and grasslands, and the southeast area consists of rolling hills supporting grassland and rocky outcrops.

Implementation of RMP and VMP Management Directives

Habitat restoration, invasive non-native species control, and fire control/threat reduction activities would result in a visually altered landscape. Habitats in this locations may be thinned, mowed, or replanted, and would appear less densely vegetated than adjacent unaltered habitats. In most instances, this visual condition would be temporary and minor as planted materials and existing native vegetation grow and fill in treated areas. Fuel modification zones adjacent to existing residential development or habitable onsite structures would be permanently maintained at a reduced density of shrubby woody plants; however, these areas would still be vegetated. None of these circumstances would alter the landscape in such a way as to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Preserve as native vegetation would remain or be replaced.

Multi-Use Trail System

The project would develop a multi-use trail system through the rocky hilly terrain in the northwestern portion of the project site and rolling hilly terrain predominantly consisting of grassland and rock outcrops in the southeastern portion of the project site. A small bridge crossing over Santa Maria Creek would also be constructed in the northwest portion. The trail system would consist of existing dirt ranch roads and newly constructed trails that would connect the existing trail segments together, ultimately offering trail access throughout the entire project site. Additional amenities would include trail signage and trailhead informational kiosks. Neither the bridge nor the new trails would be highly visible and would not affect the visual character or

quality of the project area due to the presence and visual dominance of surrounding vegetation.

Northeast Portion Infrastructure Improvements

The proposed new ranger station/interpretive facility would either be located in the renovated vacant residence or in a new replacement building of comparable size and scale to the existing onsite residence. The proposed new maintenance building would be smaller in size than the existing barn structure it would replace. The staging area east of the ranger station/interpretive facility, which would include parking, hitching rails, informational kiosks, trash receptacles, bathrooms, and picnic tables or benches, would be located directly east of the proposed ranger station and would be compatible with the visual character and quality of the project area. The riding arena, volunteer pads, and the primitive amphitheatre are proposed in the vicinity of the staging area and proposed ranger station and also would be compatible with the visual character and quality of the project area.

Although the viewing pavilion/visitor's kiosk would be constructed on a hill in the northeastern portion of the project site, it would consist of a platform structure with a semi-shaded trellis and would be in the vicinity of the existing vacant onsite residence on the hill; thus, it would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the project area.

These structural improvements would be low-density, low-scale developments that would be comparable in size and scale to the existing onsite residences and barn as well as surrounding development. Thus, none of the new buildings or structures would have the vertical height or horizontal mass to substantially alter the existing visual character of the surrounding project area.

The proposed project is compatible with the existing visual environment's visual character and quality for the following reasons: (1) habitat restoration, fire control/threat reduction measures, and construction of the staging areas, trails, buildings, and structures would not result in a substantial modification of the existing landform, substantial amounts of grading, or the creation of visually prominent cut and fill slopes; (2) no blockage of views would result from the construction of the staging area, trails, buildings, or structures; (3) the project is being developed in an area that has previously undergone development of structures that are similar in character, size, and scale to those proposed by the project; and (4) the project would be compatible with the existing visual character of the site and surrounding area, which varies from open space and agricultural lands to spaced rural residential/single-family development to industrial use.

- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact:

Northeast Portion Infrastructure Improvements

The proposed project would use outdoor security motion-sensor lighting near the ranger station and maintenance building, and the project is located within Zone B as identified by the San Diego County Light Pollution Code. However, it would not adversely affect nighttime views or astronomical observations because the project would conform to the Light Pollution Code (Section 59.101-59.115), including the Zone B lamp type and shielding requirements per fixture and hours of operation limitations for outdoor lighting and searchlights.

In addition, the proposed project will control outdoor lighting and sources of glare in the following ways:

- 1) The project will not install outdoor lighting that directly illuminates neighboring properties.
- 2) The project will not install outdoor lighting that would cast a direct beam angle towards a potential observer, such as a motorists, cyclist, or pedestrian.
- 3) The project will not install outdoor lighting for vertical surfaces such as buildings, landscaping, or signs in a manner that would result in useful light or spill light being cast beyond the boundaries of intended area to be lit.
- 4) The project will not install any highly reflective surfaces such as glare-producing glass or high-gloss surface color that will be visible along roadways, pedestrian walkways, or in the line of sight of adjacent properties.

The project will not contribute to significant impacts on day or nighttime views because the project will conform to the Light Pollution Code. The Code was developed by the San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use and Department of Public Works in cooperation with lighting engineers, astronomers, land use planners from San Diego Gas and Electric, Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories, and local community planning and sponsor groups to effectively address and minimize the impact of new sources light pollution on nighttime views. The standards in the Code are the result of this

collaborative effort and establish an acceptable level for new lighting. Compliance with the Code is required prior to issuance of any building permit for any project. Therefore, compliance with the Code ensures that the project will not create a significant new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES -- Would the project:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project area consists of lands designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land. However, based on the historic use, climate, water cost, and soil constraints within the project area, the potential future use of the Preserve is limited to grazing. A majority of the project site has been used for cattle grazing in the past and this agricultural use would continue to be allowed on site in accordance with the revised grazing plan requirements, outlined in the RMP and VMP. The construction of the proposed project would not have significant adverse project level impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use because none of the existing agricultural uses in the valley or onsite would be displaced nor would future agricultural uses be precluded as a result of construction and use of the proposed facilities and trails. Therefore, no potentially significant project level conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use would occur as a result of this project.

- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: A portion of the project site is zoned A70, which is considered to be an agricultural zone. However, based on the historic use, climate, water cost, and soil constraints, the potential future use is limited to grazing. A majority of the project site has been used for cattle grazing in the past and this agricultural use would continue to be allowed on site in accordance with the revised grazing plan requirements, outlined in the RMP and VMP. The proposed project would not result in a conflict in zoning for agricultural use because none of the existing agricultural uses in the valley or onsite would be displaced nor would future agricultural uses be precluded as a result of construction and use of the proposed facilities and trails. Additionally, the project area does not consist of land under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, there would be no conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

- c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), or timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project area does not contain forest lands or timberland. The County of San Diego does not have any existing Timberland Production Zones. In addition, the project is consistent with the zoning and a rezone of the property is not proposed. Therefore, project implementation would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland production zones.

- d) Result in the loss of forest land, conversion of forest land to non-forest use, or involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project area does not contain forest lands defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g); therefore, project implementation would

not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use. In addition, the project is not located in the vicinity of offsite forest resources.

- e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Important Farmland or other agricultural resources, to non-agricultural use?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The proposed project area contains land designated as Important Farmland; however, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use because none of the existing agricultural uses in the valley or onsite would be displaced nor would future agricultural uses in the valley or onsite be precluded as a result of construction and use of the proposed facilities and trails. Therefore, no potentially significant conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use would occur as a result of this project.

III. AIR QUALITY -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the San Diego Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS) or applicable portions of the State Implementation Plan (SIP)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes development that was anticipated in SANDAG growth projections used in development of the RAQS and SIP. The project anticipates an increase in visitors, which would result in an increase in vehicle trips to the Preserve. However, operation of the project would result in emissions of ozone precursors that were considered as part of the RAQS based on growth projections. As such, the proposed project is not expected to conflict with either the RAQS or the SIP. In addition, the

operational emissions from the project are below screening levels, and subsequently would not violate ambient air quality standards.

- b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

In general, air quality impacts from land use projects are the result of emissions from motor vehicles, and from short-term construction activities associated with such projects. The San Diego County Land Use Environment Group (LUEG) has established guidelines for determining significance which incorporate the Air Pollution Control District's (SDAPCD) established screening-level criteria for all new source review (NSR) in APCD Rule 20.2. These screening-level criteria can be used as numeric methods to demonstrate that a project's total emissions (e.g., stationary and fugitive emissions, as well as emissions from mobile sources) would not result in a significant impact to air quality. Since APCD does not have screening-level criteria for emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the use of the screening level for reactive organic compounds (ROC) from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) for the Coachella Valley (which are more appropriate for the San Diego Air Basin) are used.

Less than Significant Impact: Construction of the project would entail minimal grading; however, grading operations associated with the construction of the project would be subject to the County of San Diego Grading Ordinance which requires the implementation of dust control measures. Emissions from the construction phase would be minimal, temporary and localized, resulting in pollutant emissions below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance. In addition, the vehicle trips generated from the project will result in 156 Average Daily Trips (ADTs). According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District CEQA Guidelines for Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans, projects that generate less than 2,000 ADT are below the screening-level criteria established by the guidelines for criteria pollutants. As such, the project would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

- c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

San Diego County is presently in non-attainment for the 1-hour concentrations under the California Ambient Air Quality Standard (CAAQS) for Ozone (O₃). San Diego County is also presently in non-attainment for the annual geometric mean and for the 24-hour concentrations of Particulate Matter less than or equal to 10 microns (PM₁₀) under the CAAQS. O₃ is formed when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) react in the presence of sunlight. VOC sources include any source that burns fuels (e.g., gasoline, natural gas, wood, oil); solvents; petroleum processing and storage; and pesticides. Sources of PM₁₀ in both urban and rural areas include: motor vehicles, wood burning stoves and fireplaces, dust from construction, landfills, agriculture, wildfires, brush/waste burning, and industrial sources of windblown dust from open lands.

Less than Significant Impact: Air quality emissions associated with the project include emissions of PM₁₀, NO_x and VOCs from construction/grading activities, and also as the result of increase of visitor traffic from project implementation. However, grading on site would be minimal and grading operations associated with the construction of the project would be subject to the County of San Diego Grading Ordinance which requires the implementation of dust control measures. Emissions from the construction phase would be minimal, localized and temporary resulting in PM₁₀ and VOC emissions below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance. The vehicle trips generated from the project will result in 156 ADT. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District CEQA Guidelines for Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans, projects that generate less than 2,000 ADT are below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance.

In addition, a list of past, present and future projects within the surrounding area were evaluated (Refer to XVIII. Mandatory Findings of Significance) and none of these projects emit significant amounts of criteria pollutants. The proposed project as well as the past, present and future projects within the surrounding area, have emissions below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance, therefore, the construction and operational emissions associated with the proposed project are not expected to create a cumulatively considerable impact nor a considerable net increase of PM₁₀, or any O₃ precursors.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Air quality regulators typically define sensitive receptors as schools (Preschool-12th Grade), hospitals, resident care facilities, or day-care centers, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions that would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. The County of San Diego also considers residences as sensitive receptors since they house children and the elderly.

Less than Significant Impact: Residential development has been identified within a quarter-mile (the radius determined by the SCAQMD in which the dilution of pollutants is typically significant) of the proposed project. However, this project does not propose uses or activities that would result in exposure of these identified sensitive receptors to significant pollutant concentrations and would not place sensitive receptors near carbon monoxide hotspots. In addition, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations because the proposed project as well as the listed projects have emissions below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: No potential sources of objectionable odors have been identified in association with the proposed project. As such, no impact from odors is anticipated.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: Based on an analysis of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB 2009), the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) records, the County's Comprehensive Matrix of Sensitive Species, and the Biological Resources Report for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project (provided as an attachment to this report), dated November 2011, prepared by ICF International, the approximately 3,490-acre site supports native and naturalized habitats including eucalyptus woodland (16.10 acres), non-native woodland (1.02 acres), disturbed habitat (23.88 acres), developed lands (1.50 acres), open water (0.84 acre), agriculture (17.88 acres), Diegan coastal sage scrub (151.02 acres), disturbed coastal sage scrub (47.97 acres), coastal sage-chaparral scrub (201.34 acres), southern mixed chaparral (1,228.11 acres), disturbed southern mixed chaparral (157.80 acres), chamise chaparral (18.81 acres), scrub oak chaparral (57.80 acres), valley needlegrass grassland (8.16 acres), non-native grassland (1,396.38 acres), alkali marsh (8.81 acres), emergent wetland (0.84 acre), disturbed wetland (0.81 acre), non-vegetated channel (0.35 acre), southern coast live oak riparian forest (9.37 acres), mule fat scrub (23.26 acres), southern willow scrub (14.26 acres), open coast live oak woodland (20.58 acres), and dense coast live oak woodland (82.13 acres).

Potential Impacts**Special-Status Plant Species**

Special-status plant species detected include ashy spike-moss (*Selaginella cinerascens*), San Diego thornmint (*Acanthominta ilicifolia*), California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*), southwestern spiny rush (*Juncus acutus* ssp. *leopoldii*), Coulter's saltbush (*Atriplex coulteri*), Parish's brittlescale (*Atriplex parishii* var. *parishii*), southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), Palmer's sagewort (*Artemisia palmeri*), graceful tarplant (*Holocarpha virgata* ssp. *elongata*), rush chaparral-star (*Xanthisma junceum*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus simulans*), San Diego milkvetch (*Astragalus oocarpus*), Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*), California large-leaf

filaree (*California macrophylla*), vernal barely (*Hordeum intercedens*), and Ramona spineflower (*Chorizanthe leptotheca*). Of these, San Diego thornmint is federally-listed as threatened, state-listed as endangered, and a County List A plant species. The following plant species are County List A or B plant species: Coulter's saltbush, Parish's brittlescale, southern tarplant, San Diego milkvetch, and California large-leaf filaree. The following plant species are County List C or D plant species: ashy spike-moss, California adder's tongue, southwestern spiny rush, Palmer's sagewort, graceful tarplant, rush chaparral-star, small-flower bindweed, Engelmann oak, vernal barley, and Ramona spineflower.

Specific measures implemented under the RMP and VMP (such as non-native plant removal, habitat restoration, continued grazing, and fire management activities) may result in ground disturbance and as such, could result in impacts to listed plants species; however, such impacts would not be considered significant as these plans focus on the preservation and long-term maintenance and management of approximately 3,490 acres within the Preserve which would benefit special-status plant species and contribute to their long-term survival. Additionally, biological monitors would be utilized during non-native plant removal and habitat restoration activities to ensure impacts to listed species are avoided.

Construction of the new trail segments within the Preserve would not result in direct impacts to special-status plant species as none were observed within these proposed impact areas during any of the surveys conducted at the Preserve. Trails have been designed such that they are not subject to erosion. Although not anticipated, future re-routing of trail sections to avoid areas subject to erosion would result in ground disturbance. However, potential direct impacts to special-status plant species would not occur as a result of such activities as trails would be re-routed to the least environmentally sensitive areas and would avoid previously surveyed populations of special-status plant species.

Focused surveys for special-status plant species were not conducted outside of the identified Preserve boundaries, including within the impact area of the proposed new trail section to be constructed east of Rangeland Road and west of the Ramona Airport, the proposed pathways along the west side of Rangeland Road and the north side of Highland Valley Road, and within the impact area of the proposed new trail section that would be required if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property is utilized. As potentially suitable habitat for special-status plant species occurs along the proposed new off-site trail segment near the Ramona Airport and the potential new off-site trail segment on the RMWD property, the construction and maintenance of these segments have the potential to result in impacts to special-status plant species, if found to occur within the proposed footprint. Potential impacts to special-status plant species resulting from the project

would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the completion of focused surveys (where necessary) and the presence of a biological monitor during trail construction and major maintenance activities to ensure avoidance.

In addition, construction of the staging area in the NE portion of the Preserve would result in impacts to five (5) individuals of southern tarplant, a County List A species. An impact to five (5) individuals of southern tarplant does not represent a significant loss of the population of the plant species on the Preserve and; therefore, no mitigation is necessary.

Indirect impacts to federally or state-listed plant species during construction of new trail segments or as a result in trail usage are not anticipated to occur as listed plant species observed within the Preserve were limited to approximately 30 individuals of San Diego thornmint which were observed within the SE portion of the Preserve, more than 500 feet away from any proposed trails or associated facilities/improvements. Also, indirect impacts to County List A and/or B plant species during construction of new trail segments or as a result of trail usage are not anticipated to occur to County List A and B plant species observed within the Preserve. All County List A and B plant species observed within the Preserve occur a minimum of 100 feet away from proposed trails or associated facilities/improvements (with the exception of individuals discussed above that would be directly impacted).

Special-Status Wildlife Species

In total, 41 special-status wildlife species were detected during the 2009 and 2010 surveys at the Preserve. One special-status invertebrate, San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchibecta sandiegonensis*), is known to occur in the vernal pools in the SE portion and in the SW portion of the Preserve. Two special-status amphibian species were detected and include arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) and western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*). Seven special-status reptile species were detected and include San Diego horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*), Coronado skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus interparietalis*), Belding's orange-throated whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*), coastal western whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris multiscutatus*), coastal rosy boa (*Charina trivirgata roseofusca*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi hammondi*), and northern red diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber ruber*). Sixteen special-status bird species were detected and include great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*),

grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), and tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*). Fifteen special-status mammal species were detected and include small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), pocketed free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops femorosaccus*), big free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*), Dulzura pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus californicus femoralis*), northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*), Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*), San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*), and southern mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus fuliginata*).

Specific measures implemented under the RMP and VMP (such as continued grazing, non-native plant species removal, and vegetation management) could result in ground disturbance and impacts to suitable/ occupied habitat for special-status wildlife species; however, impacts would be minimal and would not have a substantial adverse effect on special-status wildlife species as these plans focus on the preservation and long-term maintenance and management of approximately 3,490 acres within the Preserve which would benefit special-status wildlife species and their habitats, contributing to their long-term survival.

San Diego fairy shrimp occur within the Preserve but not in the vicinity of proposed new trails or associated improvements/facilities. The proposed establishment, maintenance, and management of the Preserve would protect vernal pools and known populations of San Diego fairy shrimp.

Construction of the new trail segment across Santa Maria Creek in the NW portion of the Preserve and the new potential off-site trail segment required if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property is utilized have the potential to result in direct impacts to arroyo toad as these areas provide potentially suitable habitat for this federally listed species, which was observed upstream and downstream of these areas. In addition, trail maintenance activities within the vicinity of suitable/occupied toad habitat have the potential to result in impacts to the arroyo toad. Approximately 1.24 acres of suitable arroyo toad aestivation upland habitat (0.38 acre within the proposed east-west trail alignment at the proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek and 0.86 acre within the temporary staging area) and 0.008 acre of breeding wetland/riparian habitat (within the footprint of the dry weather crossing) would be directly affected by the project. If the alternative Santa Maria Creek crossing on the RMWD property is utilized, the project's impact to arroyo toad habitat would be reduced to 0.37 acre of suitable aestivation upland habitat (0.34 acre within the proposed on-site east-west trail alignment at the proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek and 0.03 acre within the potential off-site section within the RMWD property). Impacts to arroyo toad

would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through construction avoidance of the breeding season, trash, and dust control practices, and the use of exclusionary fencing and open pit coverings to prevent entrapment and/or direct loss of arroyo toads during construction.

Indirect impacts to the arroyo toad associated with trail use are not expected as this species is primarily active at night when the trail system within the Preserve will be closed to the public.

Stephens' kangaroo rats were observed along the Oak Country II trail in the SW portion of the Preserve as well as within the southwestern corner of the NE portion of the Preserve. In addition, most of the grasslands within the Preserve are considered suitable habitat for this species. The construction and maintenance of trails and the mowing of 0.5 acre associated with the proposed emergency evacuation road in the vicinity of these areas have the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rat. Potential impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rat resulting from the project would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the completion of focused surveys (where necessary) and the presence of a biological monitor during trail construction and major maintenance activities to ensure avoidance of occupied burrows. Mowing the 0.5 acre area with a flail mower is expected to enhance the habitat for the SKR, while avoiding impacts to the species.

Indirect impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rat associated with trail use are not expected as this species is only active at night when the trail system within the Preserve will be closed to the public.

Focused surveys for special-status wildlife species were not conducted outside of the identified Preserve boundaries, including within the impact area of the proposed new trail section to be constructed east of Rangeland Road and west of the Ramona Airport, the proposed pathway along the west side of a portion of Rangeland Road, and the impact area of the proposed new trail section that would be required if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property is utilized. Impacts associated with the proposed pathway along Rangeland Road would occur within the County-maintained right-of-way; therefore, impacts to special-status wildlife species are not anticipated to occur as a result of construction of this pathway.

As potentially suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species occurs along the proposed new off-site trail segment (4-feet wide by approximately 2,300 feet-long) near the Ramona Airport and the potential new off-site trail segment on the RMWD property, the construction and maintenance of these segments have the potential to result in impacts to special-status wildlife species, particularly those listed as federally or state endangered or threatened, if found to occur in the proposed impact area. Potential impacts to special-status wildlife species resulting from off-site trail construction would

be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the completion of a habitat assessment, focused surveys (where necessary), and the presence of a biological monitor during trail construction and major maintenance activities to ensure avoidance of direct impacts.

Raptors such as the red-shouldered hawk, Cooper's hawk, ferruginous hawk, turkey vulture, and golden eagle were observed or are known to forage in the grasslands on the Preserve. While approximately 6.27 acres of foraging habitat (non-native grassland) would be directly impacted by the project, the remainder of the non-native grasslands within the Preserve (over 1,400 acres) would be available for foraging. This represents a loss of less than 1 percent of the foraging habitat in the Preserve. In addition, implementation measures outlined in the RMP will provide additional protections for raptors, including potential seasonal closure of trail sections within the Preserve, including sections within the NW portion of the Preserve where high levels of raptor usage have been observed. As such, the project is not anticipated to result in impacts to the nesting success of the golden eagle in this portion of the Preserve. However, the project could impact the nesting success of tree and/or ground-nesting raptors if grading, clearing, or other noise generating construction activities would occur during their breeding season, defined as January 15 to July 15 and February 1 to July 31, respectively. Potential impacts to nesting birds/raptors will be avoided through prohibiting clearing or grading during the breeding season or completing pre-construction nesting bird surveys prior to project activities to ensure active nests are avoided.

While the proposed trails utilize existing roads/trails to the extent feasible and avoid rock outcrops, oak trees, and other features commonly used by raptors, trail use has the potential to result in indirect impacts to raptors. For example, if the species is continuously flushed and resting and foraging is disrupted. Such impacts would be reduced to less than significant through implementation of seasonal closures (as necessary), development and implementation of passive restoration of abandoned trails and other areas that may encourage off-trail activities, educational signage and ranger presence, continued maintenance to control the spread of invasive species within the Preserve and enhance foraging habitat within the Preserve.

The coastal cactus wren was not detected within the Preserve during biological surveys performed in 2009 and suitable habitat for this species does not occur within the Preserve. Therefore, the project would not impact the nesting success of this species.

The following sensitive bird species were not observed within the Preserve; however, the Preserve provides potentially suitable habitat for these species: coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and light-footed clapper rail. The project includes the implementation of the RMP and VMP, which involve long-term maintenance

and adaptive management of the entire Preserve and include management directives that would benefit species known to occur within the Preserve and species that may be detected during on-going monitoring efforts. Therefore, the project would not impact nesting success of the species listed above.

Sensitive Habitats

See section IV.b. for a discussion of project impacts to sensitive habitat communities.

- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: Based on the Biological Resources Report for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project, dated November 2011, prepared by ICF International, it has been determined that the project site contains riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities including non-native grassland, open coast live oak woodland, disturbed wetland, non-vegetated channel, southern mixed chaparral, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and disturbed coastal sage scrub.

Existing roads and trails to become part of the proposed multi-use trail network would not result in impacts to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities; impacts would be limited to existing disturbed/developed areas. In addition, the proposed 0.07-mile pathway along the west side of Rangeland Road would not result in impacts to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities; impacts would be limited to existing disturbed/developed areas.

Construction of the new trail segments in the NW and NE portions of the Preserve; a dry weather crossing of Santa Maria Creek in the NW portion; temporary construction staging area in the NW portion; a new off-site trail to connect the NE portion of the Preserve to Rangeland Road; the staging area in the NE portion; and other project infrastructure would directly result in impacts to the following sensitive native and naturalized habitats: non-native grassland (6.27 acres), open coast live oak woodland (0.08 acre), disturbed wetland (0.006 acre), non-vegetated channel (0.002 acre), southern mixed chaparral (0.11 acre), coastal sage-chaparral scrub (0.03 acre), and disturbed coastal sage scrub (0.13 acre). If the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property is utilized, impacts to native or naturalized

vegetation communities would be reduced from 6.63 acres to a total of 5.76 acres: 5.43 acres of non-native grassland, 0.07 acre of open coast live oak woodland, 0.10 acre of southern mixed chaparral, 0.03 acre of coastal sage-chaparral scrub, and 0.13 acre of disturbed coastal sage scrub. In addition, while not anticipated as trails have been designed such that they are not subject to erosion, the potential future re-routing of trail section to avoid areas subject to erosion, could result in impacts to sensitive natural communities. Off-site habitat preservation or mitigation credit purchases at established ratios would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: The project site contains federally protected wetlands defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, including Santa Maria Creek, tributaries to Santa Maria Creek, and associated riparian habitats such as southern willow scrub and disturbed wetlands. A formal wetland delineation was conducted for the proposed project and results are detailed in the report titled *Jurisdictional Delineation Report for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project* prepared by ICF International, dated August 2011 (provided as an attachment to this report).

The Preserve occupies a significant portion of the Santa Maria Creek subbasin of the San Dieguito River watershed. Santa Maria Creek and its tributaries drain from the mountains east of Ramona, across the Preserve, and through Bandy Canyon to its confluence with Santa Ysabel Creek. Below this confluence, the San Dieguito River flows into Lake Hodges.

The section of Santa Maria Creek evaluated during the jurisdictional delineation was determined to be a perennial wetland water of the U.S. and the adjacent floodplain was determined to be disturbed wetlands, all under the joint jurisdiction of USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB.

Three drainage features were identified along Old Survey Road that were determined to be non-wetland waters under the joint jurisdiction of USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB. The first one (Drainage 1) is located just northeast of the proposed crossing of Santa Maria Creek, the second (Drainage 2) is located approximately 1,000 feet north of the proposed crossing, and the third

(Drainage 3) is located approximately 4,000 feet north of the proposed crossing. Drainages 1 and 2 cross under Old Survey Road via existing culverts and the actual roadbed would, therefore, not fall under the jurisdiction of USACE, RWQCB, or CDFG. Drainage 3 crosses a section of Old Survey Road that has not been actively maintained. The drainage channel supports a mesic vegetation community, which is evidence that water intermittently flows through this channel; no culvert exists at this location.

The proposed project has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to jurisdictional wetlands/waters and associated buffers. However, the proposed dry weather crossing of Santa Maria Creek in the NW portion of the Preserve would result in direct impacts to 0.008 acre of jurisdictional wetland waters of the U.S./State and CDFG. Use of the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek on the RMWD property would not result in impacts to jurisdictional resources as this portion would only be utilized, with permission from the RMWD, after RMWD constructs the crossing.

Construction and maintenance of the proposed trail along Old Survey Road would result in impacts to 18 square feet (0.0004 acre) of Drainage 3, which would be regulated as a non-wetland WofUS and 36 square feet regulated as a CDFG streambed. However, potential impacts are smaller than standard mapping units and no mitigation is proposed. Construction of other related improvements (picnic areas, staging area, etc.) and implementation of the RMP and VMP are not expected to result in direct impacts to jurisdictional waters.

Portions of the southern approximately 0.50-mile segment of the proposed pathway along the west side of Rangeland Road and of the pathway along Highland Valley Road, if constructed, have the potential to result in impacts to jurisdictional waters. The southern portion of the pathway along Rangeland Road would cross the Santa Maria Creek. In addition, several culverts existing along the west side of Rangeland Road, which could be impacted.

Grazing currently occurs within the Preserve. The entire Santa Maria Creek and a variable buffer within the SW portion of the preserve (south of the RMWD property) has been fenced to exclude cattle grazing and to allow for passive restoration of riparian habitat in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board grant specification. Santa Maria Creek in the NW portion of the Preserve is not fenced. Much of the topography including rocky outcrops does not make fencing in this area feasible. Additionally, only a total of 10 bulls graze the NW portion of the Preserve between late June and November each year. A water source is located close to their enclosure and they do not utilize the creek for water. This low level of continued grazing as part of the proposed project, when considered along with implementation of the management directives identified in the RMP and VMP that would both protect and increase the functions and values of existing wetlands within the

Preserve, would not result in significant impacts to wetlands or wetland buffers.

Jurisdictional impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through (1) acquisition of permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Game, (2) the preservation of the remaining portions of Santa Maria Creek located within the Preserve, and (3) off-site restoration and/or enhancement; the details of the mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional resources (including a conceptual mitigation plan) will be finalized as part of the permitting process with USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB.

- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Based on an analysis of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB 2009), the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) records, the County's Comprehensive Matrix of Sensitive Species, and the Biological Resources Report for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project, dated November 2011, prepared by ICF International, it has been determined that impedance of the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, the use of an established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, and the use of native wildlife nursery sites would not be expected as a result of the proposed project for the following reasons:

The Preserve is identified within the North County MSCP Plan as a core habitat area (Ramona Grasslands Core - Area 13) and a linkage that connects San Pasqual Valley to the north and with Barnett Ranch and Iron Mountain preserve areas to the south. The Preserve serves as an important corridor for wildlife movement between these areas. The major wildlife movement feature located within the Preserve is Santa Maria Creek. Santa Maria Creek provides access and concealment to wildlife species of all sizes. Larger mammals such as coyotes regularly move on, off of, and across the Preserve, to and from adjacent open space. There is a box culvert under Rangeland Road that connects the two southern areas. In 2009, numerous mammal species were documented utilizing this crossing including striped skunk, coyote, long-tailed weasel, and Virginia opossum.

It is anticipated that there will be no impacts to wildlife corridors, linkages, and nursery sites. The proposed project area consists of the approximately 3,490-acre Preserve and the project includes implementation of the RMP and VMP and only minimal new trail sections and associated facilities/ improvements. The proposed project is not likely to disrupt wildlife movement because no new buildings or other obtrusive objects are expected that would preclude continued wildlife movement within and through the Preserve. In addition, long lines-of-sight will not be obstructed by new development; therefore, wildlife will still be able to pass through the project area without hindrance.

The proposed project would not impact the viability of a core wildlife area. The proposed project has been designed to utilize existing dirt roads/trails for the proposed trail network to the maximum extent feasible. In addition, reuse of existing structures is proposed for associated facilities, such as the ranger station/interpretive center. New trail sections are limited in number and would occur either near the perimeter of the Preserve (e.g., the new trail segment in the NW portion of the Preserve and the proposed pathway along a portion of Rangeland Road) or would replace a section of an existing road/trail (e.g., the new trail segment in the NE portion of the Preserve, which is being realigned to avoid an existing eroded section). Project impacts would be limited to a total of 6.628 acres of the approximately 3,490-acre Preserve. In addition, the project involves the implementation of the RMP and VMP, which involve long-term maintenance and adaptive management of the Preserve, and include management directives aimed at increasing the Preserve's overall functions and values, including its function as a core area for wildlife.

- e) Conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan or any other local policies or ordinances that protect biological resources?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: The majority of the proposed project occurs within the Draft North County MSCP Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA); the northwestern most portion of the Preserve occurs within the adopted South County MSCP. The project, which includes implementation of the RMP and VMP, has been designed to be consistent with the goals and requirements of the draft North County MSCP Plan as well as the adopted South County MSCP. Furthermore, the project has been developed in accordance with standard conservation planning principles. Such principles include preservation of large, contiguous patches of open space; maintaining

broad wildlife corridors; and preserving high value habitat types. As such, the project would not preclude or prevent the preparation of a subregional NCCP, including the North County MSCP Plan.

The project is not subject to the RPO, pursuant to Section 86.603, as it does not involve any of the discretionary actions to which the ordinance applies (e.g., Tentative Parcel Maps, Tentative Maps, Major Use Permits, etc.).

The new trail section in the NE portion of the Preserve would result in impacts to 0.03 acre of the 201.34 acres of coastal sage-chaparral scrub located within the Preserve and 0.13 acre of the 47.97 acres of disturbed coastal sage scrub located within the Preserve. Impacts to these vegetation communities have been minimized to the maximum extent practicable. In addition, significant impacts to sensitive natural communities (including coastal sage-chaparral scrub and disturbed coastal sage scrub) would be offset by the off-site preservation of habitat or the purchase of mitigation credits within an approved mitigation bank at established mitigation ratios. Therefore, the project would minimize and mitigate coastal sage scrub loss in accordance with Section 4.3 of the NCCP Guidelines. If the project is implemented subsequent to approval of the Draft North County MSCP, impacts to coastal sage-chaparral scrub and disturbed coastal sage scrub would be authorized and mitigated in accordance with that plan.

No significant impacts to Biological Resource Core Areas would occur as a result of project implementation as discussed in Section IV.d. above.

The project area includes the entire Ramona Grasslands Preserve and does connect lands of high value habitat, as defined by the Southern California Coastal Sage Scrub NCCP Guidelines. However, implementation of the project would not preclude connectivity of the various portions of the Preserve (NE, NW, SE, and SW) or to adjacent open space lands. Also, the proposed project includes implementation of the RMP and VMP, which would provide for the long-term management for the benefit of sensitive biological resources, including through the maintenance and enhancement of wildlife movement corridors and linkages.

One MSCP narrow endemic plant species, San Diego thornmint, was observed within the NE portion of the Preserve. In addition, approximately 30 individuals of this species occur within the SE portion of the Preserve. Direct impacts to this species are being avoided and indirect impacts are not expected as all individuals are located more than 500 feet away from any proposed trails or associated facilities/improvements.

The following three Draft North County MSCP narrow endemic plant species were observed within the Preserve: Coulter's saltbush, Parish brittlescale, and southern tarplant. Coulter's saltbush and Parish brittlescale are located within the SE portion of the Preserve and more than 1,000 feet away from any proposed trails or associated facilities/improvements. Therefore, direct and indirect impacts to these species are not anticipated.

Construction of the staging area within the NE portion of the Preserve would result in impacts to five (5) individuals of southern tarplant. However, these impacts would not be considered significant as the loss of these individuals represents less than 5% of the population of this species within the Preserve, which would be managed and maintained in perpetuity for the benefit of biological resources, including southern tarplant.

The following three MSCP narrow endemic wildlife species were observed on the Preserve: burrowing owl, arroyo toad, and golden eagle. One burrowing owl was incidentally observed within the vicinity of the proposed new trail section that would connect the eastern and western portions of the Preserve; the survey efforts to date have not included areas outside of the identified Preserve boundaries. The construction of this new trail segment and the potential new off-site segment required if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek is utilized have the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to burrowing owl. Potential impacts to burrowing owls resulting from the project would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the completion of focused surveys (where necessary) and the presence of a biological monitor during trail construction and major maintenance activities to ensure avoidance of occupied burrows.

Construction of the dry weather crossing at Santa Maria Creek in the NW portion of the Preserve, the temporary construction staging area associated with construction of a bridge over the Santa Maria Creek, and the potential off-site trail segment required if the alternative crossing of Santa Maria Creek is utilized have the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to the arroyo toad as these areas provide potentially suitable habitat for this species, which was observed upstream and downstream of the proposed crossing. Impacts to arroyo toad would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through construction avoidance of the breeding season, trash, and dust control practices, and the use of exclusionary fencing and open pit coverings to prevent entrapment and/or direct loss of arroyo toads during construction.

The project would not result in the take of eagles, eagle eggs or any part of an eagle. Eagles are known to nest adjacent to the NW portion of the Preserve, but are not known to nest within the Preserve. A pair of golden eagles is known to nest on cliffs located outside of the Preserve and have been observed foraging at the Preserve. The known nesting site is located half a mile from the nearest existing trail that is proposed to be part of the formal trail network within the

Preserve; the closest proposed new trail is located over 4,000 feet from the known eagle nesting location (and is not within sight of the known nesting location). Direct impacts to golden eagles are not anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project as the known nesting site will be avoided and as impacts to foraging habitat are minimal (6.27 acres of impact to NNG within the approximately 3,490-acre Preserve, which supports over 1,400 acres of grasslands). Increased human and domestic pet presence within the Preserve has the potential to result in indirect impacts to the golden eagle. However, potential impacts would be avoided through the implementation of specific management directives outlined in the RMP and VMP. Some such directives include closure and passive restoration of the southern trail loop associated with Old Survey Route 97 closest to the known nesting location; continued maintenance to control invasive plant species within the Preserve; and the ongoing monitoring and adaptive management of the Preserve, which could include seasonal closure of trail sections associated with Old Survey Road 97 in the NW portion and/or trail sections within the NE portion of the Preserve where foraging eagles have been frequently observed. The County DPR or other entities responsible for regional monitoring will conduct annual surveys of known off-site nest locations to determine occupancy during the breeding period (December through June). In addition, DPR will monitor the numbers and types of trail users and identify peak trail usage times. This data will be used to determine if and where seasonal closures of trails will be necessary to avoid impacts to golden eagles.

The following two Draft North County MSCP narrow endemic wildlife species were observed within the Preserve: tricolored blackbird and Stephens' kangaroo rat. The tricolored blackbird was detected along Santa Maria Creek within the SE portion of the Preserve, more than 2,000 feet away from any proposed trails or associated infrastructure. Therefore, direct and indirect impacts are not anticipated. Stephens' kangaroo rats were observed along the Oak Country II trail in the SW portion of the Preserve as well as within the southwestern corner of the NE portion of the Preserve. In addition, most of the grasslands within the Preserve are considered suitable habitat for this species to occur. The construction and maintenance of trails in the vicinity of these areas has the potential to result in direct impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rat. Potential impacts to Stephens' kangaroo rat resulting from the project would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through the completion of focused surveys (where necessary) and the presence of a biological monitor during trail construction to ensure avoidance of potentially occupied or occupied burrows.

Finally, the project could result in impacts to migratory birds or destruction of active migratory bird nests and/or eggs protected under the MBTA. The project may destroy birds or bird nests protected under the MBTA if grading or vegetation clearing is conducted during the breeding season for these taxa (approximately January 15 – September 15). Such impacts would violate the MBTA and would be considered significant. Biological monitoring and avoidance of active nests

during the breeding season would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: According to a previous cultural resources inventory conducted for the preserve, a total of 229 cultural resources, including 211 sites and 18 isolated finds, were identified within the Preserve (Case and Carrico 2010). ICF prepared a cultural resources technical report (provided as an attachment to this report), dated November 2011, which evaluated the significance of cultural resources based on the results of an inventory conducted for the entire Preserve (Case and Carrico 2010). The inventory report compiled information from several separate studies, including studies of the NE (Carrico 2003) and SW (Carrico and Cooley 2005) portions undertaken prior to the establishment of the Preserve, as well as original field studies for the NW and SE portions. The report also included the results of a records search that was undertaken for the Preserve and a ¼ mile buffer around the Preserve.

The 211 sites consisted of 171 prehistoric sites, 6 multi-component, 29 historic, and 5 sites of unknown age. The prehistoric resource types on the Preserve include large and small habitation sites, milling stations, quarries, lithic scatters, rock alignments and enclosures, and a complex of sites that represent the prehistoric and ethnographic village of *Pa'mu*. Historic resources include standing structures, roadways, rock features, a mine, a dam, survey monuments, WWII era bombing targets, and trash scatters. Ninety-eight other cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-quarter mile radius of the Preserve.

Based on the results of the cultural resources report, it has been determined that some of the historic resources are significant pursuant to the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5). Of the 229 resources that could be impacted by implementation of the RMP and VMP, previous studies have tested and evaluated only 40 of these archaeological sites. Thirteen have been found significant, including 10 that have been found significant under the County of San Diego's RPO. Twenty-seven sites were evaluated as not significant, and the 18 isolates are also not

considered significant. However, five of the resources evaluated as not significant would be part of a proposed archaeological district related to the ethnographic village of *Pa'mu*. As such, they would be considered contributing elements to the district, and therefore significant. The remaining 171 cultural resources have not been formally evaluated and are therefore considered potentially significant.

Implementation of RMP and VMP Management Directives

Implementation of the RMP and VMP management directives could result in impacts to cultural resources.

The RMP allows for the development of interpretive and educational materials. To avoid any impacts to cultural resources, these materials would be developed in such a way that information on the location of the resources is not released to the public. For prehistoric and ethnographic resources, interpretive and educational materials would be developed in coordination with Native American representatives to ensure that other sensitive information is not disclosed as well.

As a component of the VMP, fire management activities, particularly those involving vegetation removal, ground disturbing activity, or use of vehicles or heavy equipment, have the potential to impact cultural resources. In order to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level, prior to any fire management activity, the location of known cultural resources would be reviewed in order to develop a strategy to avoid the resources. Installation of signage, fencing, or gates placed along the trails also would involve ground disturbing activity (i.e., digging of post holes), and would have the potential to impact cultural resources. These impacts would be avoided through location of any trail signage or fencing in areas safely outside the boundaries of known cultural resources. Where there is a potential for resources, an archaeological and Native American monitor (as necessary) would be required to be present during ground disturbance activities.

Many other activities in the RMP and VMP would not impact cultural resources. For example, the VMP indicates that habitat restoration would be passive, and so would not have direct impacts on cultural resources. Furthermore, in the VMP, mechanical vegetation removal that might impact cultural resources is not anticipated.

The proposed mowing of 0.5 acre in the NE portion of the Preserve for the emergency access route will utilize a flail mower that will not result in ground disturbance and therefore would not result in significant impacts to cultural resources as no ground disturbance would occur.

Multi-Use Trail System

Improvements to existing trails would be minimal and limited to future road maintenance—which would confine activities to the existing trails and would not involve ground disturbing activity—and erosion control. Impacts related to continued use of the existing roads/trails would not differ in kind from the impacts resources along the trails have already experienced. For this reason, it is not anticipated that those resources located in areas of existing trails would suffer direct impacts from trail use or ongoing maintenance.

It is possible, however, that resources in the vicinity of the existing trails might be impacted by visitor-caused damage, such as looting or vandalism. It is important to note that in discussions with Native American representatives, none of the representatives identified this as a particularly pressing concern for the resources in the vicinity of the trails. Instead, more concern was expressed for resources that might have sacred significance. Most of the prehistoric resources in the vicinity of the trails are small milling stations with few associated artifacts. The exception is CA-SDI-19558, a large habitation site. It was identified as a sensitive resource that, because of its inviting geographical location, might draw unwanted visitor attention. Also, any of the resources located along the existing trails may contain artifacts that could be collected by visitors. Appropriately placed fencing and signage would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Unlike existing trail reuse, new trail construction has the potential to directly affect cultural resources along the route of the trail. All new trail segments within the boundaries of the Preserve, including the proposed bridge crossing and temporary construction staging area, as well as the alternative trail segment that would connect to a road and bridge crossing on RMWD property, were designed to be located in areas that would avoid cultural resources to the greatest extent feasible. It is still possible that the final construction siting of the Santa Maria Creek crossing could result in significant impacts to cultural resources located within the proposed bridge construction footprint or in temporary construction staging areas. Another potential impact could occur to a single cultural resource (CA-SDI-10270) located along the route of the proposed trail between the NE portion of the Preserve and Rangeland Road. To mitigate these impacts, final design placement of these improvements would be coordinated with a qualified archaeologist such that sensitive cultural resources are avoided. Since the trail easement associated with CA-SDI-10270 is only 25-feet wide, it may not be possible to entirely avoid this resource. If avoidance is infeasible, a limited program of subsurface archaeological testing would be implemented to evaluate the resource for significance according to CRHR and San Diego RPO criteria. If the resource is found to be significant and cannot be avoided, additional mitigation would need to be developed, which might include data recovery excavation.

In addition, it is possible that ground disturbing activity, even in areas with no known cultural resources, could impact previously unrecorded cultural resources. Monitoring of ground-disturbing activities by a qualified archaeologist and/or Native American representative, along with the evaluation and treatment of newly discovered cultural resources would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

NE Portion Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure improvements, which propose to alter or demolish extant historic-period structures and which will involve ground disturbing activity, such as trenching of an existing water line and grading for parking, also have the potential to damage or destroy cultural resources. Infrastructure improvements would occur primarily in the NE portion of the Preserve. Two cultural resources are located in the area of the proposed staging area: CA-SDI-16579 and P-37-025102. However, according to the 2003 site record, P-37-025102, a historic ranch complex, has been determined ineligible for listing in the CRHR because it lacks distinctive architectural and design characteristics, and is not associated with significant people or events in local, state, or regional history. This evaluation applies to the residence as well as associated structures, including a barn and rodeo corral. CA-SDI-16579, a historic trash scatter, has been recommended as ineligible in this document because of its poor information potential and disturbed context.

A single prehistoric resource, CA-SDI-16628, is located in a nearby area where a pavilion will be constructed as a viewpoint. This resource has not been evaluated and so must be considered significant. Potential impacts to this resource would be avoided through design (i.e., placement of the pavilion outside of the resource).

- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: Based on the Cultural Resources Phase I Survey and Inventory for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve, discussed in Section V.a. above, it has been determined that the Preserve includes 12 prehistoric resources that are CEQA-significant and 10 are also County RPO significant. The latter must always be avoided, whereas CEQA significant resources can be mitigated by a research design and data recovery program to capture the scientific importance of the resource. In addition to significance based on CEQA criteria, prehistoric resources may be

deemed as significant cultural properties or places by the Native American community. For resources so classified, DPR would need to have on-going consultation with the Native American community to clearly delineate the constraints governing those resources.

Unevaluated resources or resources already determined to be significant that are adjacent to the multi-use trail system or designated staging areas should be periodically inspected by qualified personnel to ensure that no degradation has occurred. It is recommended that resources should be inspected every five years. Each inspection should be documented by a report that describes current conditions at the resource with particular emphasis on any adverse changes to site integrity. If degradation is identified the reports should also present possible solutions.

Implementation of RMP and VMP Management Directives

See the discussion in Section V.a. above.

Multi-Use Trail System

See the discussion in Section V.a. above.

NE Portion Infrastructure Improvements

See the discussion in Section V.a. above.

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique geologic feature?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project area may contain a unique geological feature that is listed in the County's Guidelines for Determining Significance for Unique Geologic Resources. The unique geologic feature is Green Valley Tonalite, which is identified in Green Valley, between U.S. 395 and Ramona. Green Valley is located west of the project area, and the Green Valley Tonalite could occur within the projects western boundary. The proposed project would result in impacts to a total of approximately 6.6 acres, including approximately 5 acres located in the NE portion of the Preserve. Impacts would be related to minor surface disturbance (trails, supporting infrastructure, staffing areas etc.) and; therefore, it is not anticipated that the areas proposed for development would directly or indirectly destroy a unique geologic feature. Project impacts are therefore considered to be less than significant.

d) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: A review of the County's Paleontological Resources Maps indicates that the project is located in an area that has low-to-no potential for containing paleontological resources. The project area is located within the Peninsular Ranges Region, which is primarily underlain by plutonic igneous rock. Due to the original igneous nature of the project area's rock strata and the subsequent metamorphism, the likelihood of paleontological remains is rare. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly impact any paleontological resources.

e) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: It is possible that ground disturbing activity, even in areas with no known human remains, could impact previously unrecorded human remains. As outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, in the event that human remains are discovered during grading or construction of the project, the County will work with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 to ensure that all human remains will be appropriately treated or disposed of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any items associated with native American burials with the appropriate native Americans as identified by the NAHC. Compliance with state and County-mandated procedures would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:

- a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
- i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist

for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?
Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project area is not located in a fault rupture hazard zone identified by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, Special Publication 42, Revised 1997, Fault-Rupture Hazards Zones in California, or located within any other area with substantial evidence of a known fault. Therefore, there would be no impact from the exposure of people or structures to adverse effects from a known fault-rupture hazard zone as a result of this project.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The *Uniform Building Code* (UBC) and the *California Building Code* (CBC) classifies all San Diego County with the highest seismic zone criteria, Zone 4. However, the proposed project is not located within five kilometers of the centerline of a known active-fault zone as defined within the *Uniform Building Code's Maps of Known Active Fault Near-Source Zones in California*. Additionally, to ensure the structural integrity of all buildings and structures, the project will conform to the Seismic Requirements as outlined within the CBC. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from strong seismic ground shaking.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project area, particularly the southern half, includes lands within a "Potential Liquefaction Area" as identified in the

County Guidelines for Determining Significance for Geologic Hazards. Construction of the proposed ranger station and maintenance building would replace existing development, and the proposed viewing pavilion would be located adjacent to another existing residence. The presence of these older existing developments indicates that on-site conditions do not have susceptibility to settlement and liquefaction. In addition, since liquefaction potential at the site is considered low, earthquake-induced lateral spreading is not considered to be a seismic hazard at the site and impacts would be less than significant.

iv. Landslides?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The northern portion of the project site contains areas identified as "Landslide Susceptibility Areas." Landslide Susceptibility Areas were developed based on landslide risk profiles included in the *Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, San Diego, CA* (County, 2010). Landslide risk areas from this plan were based on data including steep slopes (greater than 25%); soil series data (SANDAG based on USGS 1970s series); soil-slip susceptibility from USGS; and Landslide Hazard Zone Maps (limited to western portion of the County) developed by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology (DMG). Also included within Landslide Susceptibility Areas are gabbroic soils on slopes steeper than 15% in grade because these soils are slide prone. However, the areas of the project proposed to be developed do not show evidence of either pre-existing or potential conditions that could become unstable and result in landslides. Proposed structures would be constructed on flat, previously disturbed properties and landform modification would be minimal. Therefore, there would be no potentially significant impact from the exposure of people or structures to adverse effects from adverse effects of landslides.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: According to the Soil Survey of San Diego County, the soils on the Preserve are identified as Acid Igneous Rock Land,

Bonsall, Bonsall-Fallbrook, Bosanko, Cieneba, Cieneba-Fallbrook, Fallbrook, Las Posas, Placentia, Ramona, Tujunga, Visalia, and Vista soil associations. These soils have erodibility ratings that range from “slight” to “moderate” and “high” as indicated by the Soil Survey for the San Diego Area, prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation and Forest Service dated December 1973. However, the project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil for the following reasons:

- The project would not result in unprotected erodible soils, would not alter existing drainage patterns, and would not develop steep slopes.
- The project would include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure sediment does not erode from the proposed project site including measures to counter the effects of trail erosion.

Due to these factors, it has been found that the project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

- c) Will the project produce unstable geological conditions that will result in adverse impacts resulting from landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project is not located on or near geological formations that are unstable or would potentially become unstable as a result of the project. Additionally, the project will not alter the land in any way as to create unstable conditions as the project does not propose landform alteration. For further information refer to VI. Geology and Soils, Question a., i-iv listed above.

- d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project area includes land with expansive soils as defined within Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994). This was confirmed by staff review of the Soil Survey for the San Diego Area,

prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation and Forest Service dated December 1973. The soils on-site are Acid Igneous Rock Land, Bonsall, Bonsall-Fallbrook, Bosanko, Cieneba, Cieneba-Fallbrook, Fallbrook, Las Posas, Placentia, Ramona, Tujunga, Visalia, and Vista soil associations. However, the project would not have any significant impacts because the project is required to comply with the improvement requirements identified in the 1997 UBC, Division III – Design Standard for Design of Slab-On-Ground Foundations to Resist the Effects of Expansive Soils and Compressible Soils, which ensure suitable structure safety in areas with expansive soils. Therefore, these soils would not create substantial risks to life or property.

- e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less Than Significant Impact: The project proposes to discharge domestic waste to on-site wastewater systems (OSWS), also known as septic systems. The project involves two septic systems associated with existing houses located in the NE portion of the Preserve. Discharged wastewater must conform to the Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) applicable standards, including the Regional Basin Plan and the California Water Code. California Water Code Section 13282 allows RWQCBs to authorize a local public agency to issue permits for OSWS "to ensure that systems are adequately designed, located, sized, spaced, constructed and maintained." The RWQCBs with jurisdiction over San Diego County have authorized the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health (DEH) to issue certain OSWS permits throughout the County and within the incorporated cities.

DEH has reviewed the OSWS lay-out for the project pursuant to DEH, Land and Water Quality Division's, "On-site Wastewater Systems: Permitting Process and Design Criteria." DEH was unable to test the two existing septic systems because water is not currently available at the houses. The house on the bottom of the hill is on a city water meter and the water pipe is within 10-15 feet of the house. The nearest water source for the house on the hill is a well at the bottom of the hill about 300 yards to the west. DEH took water samples at this well in February 2011 and the water passed a colilert test and is potable. In order to test the septic system, a new water line (part of the proposed Project) would have to be dug from the well to the house on top of the hill. DEH reported that the septic tank associated with the house at the

bottom of the hill is partially filled w/ dirt so it will need to be replaced with a new plastic tank but will use the same footprint. DEH also reported that the septic tank associated with the house on the hill seems functional, but would need to be tested. This septic tank could be replaced with a new plastic tank and would use the same footprint. Therefore, the project has soils capable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems as determined by the authorized, local public agency. In addition, the project will comply with the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 6, Div. 8, Chap. 3, Septic Tanks and Seepage Pits.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS -- Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions are said to result in an increase in the earth's average surface temperature commonly referred to as global warming. This rise in global temperature is associated with long-term changes in precipitation, temperature, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system, known as climate change. These changes are now broadly attributed to GHG emissions, particularly those emissions that result from the human production and use of fossil fuels.

GHGs include carbon dioxide, methane, halocarbons (HFCs), and nitrous oxide, among others. Human induced GHG emissions are a result of energy production and consumption, and personal vehicle use, among other sources. A regional GHG inventory prepared for the San Diego Region identified on-road transportation (cars and trucks) as the largest contributor of GHG emissions in the region, accounting for 46% of the total regional emissions. Electricity and natural gas combustion were the second (25%) and third (9%) largest regional contributors, respectively, to regional GHG emissions.

Climate changes resulting from GHG emissions could produce an array of adverse environmental impacts including water supply shortages, severe drought, increased flooding, sea level rise, air pollution from increased formation of ground level ozone and particulate matter, ecosystem changes, increased wildfire risk, agricultural impacts, ocean and terrestrial species impacts, among other adverse effects.

In 2006, the State passed the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, commonly referred to as AB 32, which set the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal for the State of California into law. The law requires that by 2020, State emissions must be reduced to 1990 levels by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from significant sources via regulation, market mechanisms, and other actions. According to the San Diego County Greenhouse Gas Inventory (Anders et al. 2008), the region must reduce its GHG emissions by 33 percent from “business-as-usual” emissions to achieve 1990 emissions levels by the year 2020. “Business-as-usual” refers to the 2020 emissions that would have occurred in the absence of the mandated reductions.

Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), passed in 2008, links transportation and land use planning with global warming. It requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to set regional targets for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles. Under this law, if regions develop integrated land use, housing and transportation plans that meet SB 375 targets, new projects in these regions can be relieved of certain review requirements under CEQA. Development of regional targets is underway and SANDAG is in the process of preparing the region’s Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) which will be a new element of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The strategy will identify how regional greenhouse gas reduction targets, as established by the ARB, will be achieved through development patterns, transportation infrastructure investments, and/or transportation measures or policies that are determined to be feasible.

In addressing the potential for a project to generate GHG emissions that would have a potentially significant cumulative effect on the environment, a 900 metric ton threshold was selected to identify those projects that would be required to calculate emissions and implement mitigation measures to reduce a potentially significant impact. The 900 metric ton screening threshold is based on a threshold included in the California Air Pollution Controls Officers Association (CAPCOA) white paper that covers methods for addressing greenhouse gas emissions under CEQA. The CAPCOA white paper references the 900 metric ton guideline as a conservative threshold for requiring further analysis and mitigation. The 900 metric ton threshold was based on a review of data from four diverse cities (Los Angeles in southern California and Pleasanton, Dublin, and Livermore in northern California) to identify the threshold that would capture at least 90% of the residential units or office space on the pending applications list. This threshold will require a substantial portion of future development to minimize GHG emissions to ensure implementation of AB 32 targets is not impeded. By ensuring that projects that generate more than 900 metric tons of GHG implement mitigation measures to reduce emissions, it is expected that a majority of future development will contribute to emission reduction goals that will assist the region in meeting its GHG reduction targets.

It should be noted that an individual project's GHG emissions would generally not result in direct impacts under CEQA, as the climate change issue is global in nature, however an individual project could be found to contribute to a potentially significant cumulative impact. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(f) states that an EIR shall analyze greenhouse gas emissions resulting from a proposed project when the incremental contribution of those emissions may be cumulatively considerable.

The project includes implementation of a multi-use trail system and several small recreational facilities that are expected to generate less than 900 metric tons of GHG emissions based on estimates of GHG emissions for various project types included in the CAPCOA white paper. Emissions from the project would be generated from an anticipated increase in vehicle trips with implementation of new public access and other public amenities proposed by the project. The project's GHG emissions are found to have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to GHG emissions because the project would generate less than 900 metric tons of GHGs.

Furthermore, projects that generate less than 900 metric tons of GHG would also participate in emission reductions because air emissions including GHGs are under the purview of CARB (or other regulatory agencies) and would be "regulated" either by CARB, the Federal Government, or other entities. For example, new vehicles would be subject to increased fuel economy standards and emission reductions, large and small appliances would be subject to more strict emissions standards, and energy delivered to consumers would increasingly come from renewable sources. As a result, even the emissions that result from projects that produce less than 900 metric tons of GHG would be subject to emission reductions. Likewise, the project would also participate in the mandated emissions reductions through energy and resource use that is subject to emission reduction mandates beyond "business-as-usual."

Therefore, it is determined that the project would result in less than cumulatively considerable impacts associated with GHG emissions and no mitigation is required.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: In 2006, the State passed the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, commonly referred to as AB 32, which set the greenhouse

gas emissions reduction goal for the State of California into law. The law requires that by 2020, State emissions must be reduced to 1990 levels by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from significant sources via regulation, market mechanisms, and other actions.

Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), passed in 2008, links transportation and land use planning with global warming. It requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to set regional targets for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles. Under this law, if regions develop integrated land use, housing and transportation plans that meet SB 375 targets, new projects in these regions can be relieved of certain review requirements under CEQA. Development of regional targets is underway and SANDAG is in the process of preparing the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) which will be a new element of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The strategy will identify how regional greenhouse gas reduction targets, as established by the ARB, will be achieved through development patterns, transportation infrastructure investments, and/or transportation measures or policies that are determined to be feasible.

To implement State mandates to address climate change in local land use planning, local land use jurisdictions are generally preparing GHG emission inventories and reduction plans and incorporating climate change policies into local General Plans to ensure development is guided by a land use plan that reduces GHG emissions. The County of San Diego is currently in the process of updating its General Plan and incorporating associated climate change policies. These policies will provide direction for individual development projects to reduce GHG emissions and help the County meet its GHG emission reduction targets.

Until local plans are developed to address greenhouse gas emissions, such as a local Sustainable Communities Strategy and updated General Plan Policies, the project is evaluated to determine whether it would impede the implementation of AB 32 GHG reduction targets. For the reasons discussed in the response to question VII.a), the project would not impede the implementation of AB 32 reduction targets. Therefore, the project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or wastes or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Project implementation would not involve the routine use and storage of hazardous materials; however, construction activities associated with multi-use trail improvements and the proposed facility modifications/improvements at the staging site in the NE portion of the Preserve would involve periodic and routine transport, use, storage, and disposal of minor amounts of chemicals routinely associated with construction, such as vehicle fuels (gasoline and diesel), engine oil, cartridges containing primer for ignition and nitrocellulose propellant for gas production, hydraulic fluid, and transmission fluid. Also, fuel and plant herbicides (glyphosate, imazapyr, triclopyr) would be transported and used on site during vegetation management (e.g., invasive non-native plant species controls, habitat restoration). Plant herbicides used in the restoration of sites have very low toxicity ("caution" ratings) and formulations approved for use in aquatic areas would be used. No disposal of materials would occur on the Preserve. In addition, the project site includes two facilities listed on the EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS) as a Hazardous Materials Handler. These facilities include Cruise Air Aviation and Ramona Aircraft Painting, Inc., both of which are located along Montecito Road within the bounds of the project site. However, the project would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment because all storage, handling, transport, emission and disposal of hazardous substances would be in full compliance with local, State, and Federal regulations. California Government Code § 65850.2 requires that no final certificate of occupancy or its substantial equivalent be issued unless there is verification that the owner or authorized agent has met, or is meeting, the applicable requirements of the Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 2, Section 25500-25520.

The project also proposes to demolish or renovate two onsite residences that were constructed prior to 1980 that have been determined to contain both lead based paint (LBP) and asbestos containing materials (ACMs). Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used up until 1978 in paint used on walls, woodwork, siding, windows, and doors. Lead containing materials shall be managed by applicable regulations including, at a minimum, the hazardous waste disposal requirements (Title 22 CCR Division 4.5, the worker health and safety requirements (Title 8 CCR Section 1532.1) and the State Lead Accreditation, Certification, and Work Practice Requirements (Title 17 CCR Division 1, Chapter 8). Asbestos was used extensively from the 1940's until the late 1970's in the construction industry for fireproofing, thermal and acoustic insulation, condensation control, and decoration. The USEPA has determined that there is no "safe" exposure level to asbestos. It is therefore highly regulated by the USEPA, CalEPA, and the CalOSHA. Demolition or renovation operations that involve asbestos-containing materials must

conform to San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Rules 361.140-361.156. In accordance with existing regulations, the project would be required to incorporate asbestos and lead abatement and control measures as part of demolition or renovation activities (County of San Diego 2011).

The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health Hazardous Materials Division (DEH HMD) is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for San Diego County responsible for enforcing Chapter 6.95 of the Health and Safety Code. As the CUPA, the DEH HMD is required to regulate hazardous materials business plans and chemical inventory, hazardous waste and tiered permitting, underground storage tanks, and risk management plans. The Hazardous Materials Business Plan is required to contain basic information on the location, type, quantity and health risks of hazardous materials stored, used, or disposed of onsite. The plan also contains an emergency response plan which describes the procedures for mitigating a hazardous release, procedures and equipment for minimizing the potential damage of a hazardous materials release, and provisions for immediate notification of the HMD, the Office of Emergency Services, and other emergency response personnel such as the local Fire Agency having jurisdiction. Implementation of the emergency response plan facilitates rapid response in the event of an accidental spill or release, thereby reducing potential adverse impacts. Furthermore, the DEH HMD is required to conduct ongoing routine inspections to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations; to identify safety hazards that could cause or contribute to an accidental spill or release; and to suggest preventative measures to minimize the risk of a spill or release of hazardous substances.

Therefore, due to the strict requirements that regulate hazardous substances outlined above and the fact that the initial planning, ongoing monitoring, and inspections would occur in compliance with local, State, and Federal regulation; the project would not result in any potentially significant impacts related to the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous substances or related to the accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances.

- b) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Therefore, the project will not have any effect on an existing or proposed school.

- c) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, or is otherwise known to have been subject to a release of hazardous substances and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Based on a regulatory database search, the project site has not been subject to a release of hazardous substances. The project site is not included in any of the following lists or databases: the State of California Hazardous Waste and Substances sites list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5., the San Diego County Hazardous Materials Establishment database, the San Diego County DEH Site Assessment and Mitigation (SAM) Case Listing, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program Database ("CalSites" Envirostor Database), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS) listing, the EPA's Superfund CERCLIS database or the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL). Additionally, the project does not propose structures for human occupancy or significant linear excavation within 1,000 feet of an open, abandoned, or closed landfill, is not located on or within 250 feet of the boundary of a parcel identified as containing burn ash (from the historic burning of trash), does not contain a leaking Underground Storage Tank, and is not located on a site with the potential for contamination from historic uses such as intensive agriculture, industrial uses, a gas station or vehicle repair shop. A majority of the SE portion of the project site is located within the Ramona Bombing Target and Emergency Landing Field Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS). A site inspection report, dated February 2010, prepared by Parsons Infrastructure and Technology Group, Inc., concluded that no unacceptable risks to human health are expected due to exposure to surface soils and sediments in the FUDS. Therefore, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment.

- d) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport,

would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project is located within an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the Ramona Airport and falls within the designated Inner Safety Zone, Inner Turning Zone, Outer Safety Zone, Sideline Zone, and Traffic Pattern Zone, which are identified as having high, moderate, low to moderate, low to moderate, and low risk levels, respectively. However, the project intends to implement RMP and VMP management directives and related design improvements to enhance the existing Preserve, including establishment of a multi-use trail system (for hiking, biking, and equestrian use), a new ranger station and maintenance building, staging area, picnic shade structures, a primitive amphitheater, and viewing pavilion/visitor's kiosk. These improvements would not result in hazards to airport safety or surrounding land uses for the following reasons:

- The project would comply with Airport Land Use Compatibility Policies for the Ramona Airport, including: Noise, Safety, Airspace Protection, and Overflight Compatibility Policies.
- The project does not propose any distracting visual hazards including but not limited to distracting lights, glare, sources of smoke or other obstacles or an electronic hazard that would interfere with aircraft instruments or radio communications. Therefore, the project complies with the Federal Aviation Administration Runway Approach Protection Standards (Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 77 – Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace).
- The project does not propose construction of any structure equal to or greater than 150 feet in height, constituting a safety hazard to aircraft and/or operations from an airport or heliport.
- The project does not propose any artificial bird attractor, including but not limited to reservoirs, golf courses with water hazards, large detention and retention basins, wetlands, landscaping with water features, wildlife refuges, or agriculture (especially cereal grains).

Therefore, the project would not constitute a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

- e) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project is not within one mile of a private airstrip. As a result, the project would not constitute a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

The following sections summarize the project's consistency with applicable emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans.

i. OPERATIONAL AREA EMERGENCY PLAN:

Less than Significant Impact: The Operational Area Emergency Plan is a comprehensive emergency plan that defines responsibilities, establishes an emergency organization, defines lines of communications, and is designed to be part of the statewide Standardized Emergency Management System. The Operational Area Emergency Plan provides guidance for emergency planning and requires subsequent plans to be established by each jurisdiction that has responsibilities in a disaster situation. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan includes an overview of the risk assessment process, identifies hazards present in the jurisdiction, hazard profiles, and vulnerability assessments. The plan also identifies goals, objectives and actions for each jurisdiction in the County of San Diego, including all cities and the County unincorporated areas. The project would not interfere with this plan because it would not prohibit subsequent plans from being established or prevent the goals and objectives of existing plans from being carried out.

ii. SAN DIEGO COUNTY NUCLEAR POWER STATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

No Impact: The San Diego County Nuclear Power Station Emergency Response Plan would not be interfered with by the project due to the location of the project, plant and the specific requirements of the plan. The emergency plan for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station includes an emergency planning zone within a 10-mile radius. All land area within 10 miles of the plant is not within the jurisdiction of the unincorporated County and as such a project in the unincorporated area is not expected to interfere with any response or evacuation.

iii. OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY ELEMENT

No Impact: The Oil Spill Contingency Element would not be interfered with because the project is not located along the coastal zone or coastline.

iv. EMERGENCY WATER CONTINGENCIES ANNEX AND ENERGY SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN

No Impact: The Emergency Water Contingencies Annex and Energy Shortage Response Plan would not be interfered with because the project does not propose altering major water or energy supply infrastructure, such as the California Aqueduct.

v. DAM EVACUATION PLAN

No Impact: The Dam Evacuation Plan would not be interfered with because the project is not located within a dam inundation zone.

- g) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The proposed project is located within and in the vicinity of wildlands to the north, west, and south of the site that have the potential to support wildland fires. However, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires because the project would comply with the regulations relating to emergency access, water supply, and defensible space specified in the Uniform Fire Code, Article 9 and Appendix II-A, Section 16, as adopted and amended by the local fire protection district. Implementation of these fire safety standards have been incorporated into the RMP and VMP. In

accordance with County policy, the Ramona Fire District also would be involved in design review for the project. Therefore, through compliance with the Uniform Fire Code, Article 9 and Appendix II-A, Section 16, it is not anticipated that the project will expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving hazardous wildland fires.

- h) Expose people to significant risk of injury or death involving vectors, including mosquitoes, rats or flies?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not involve or support uses that allow water to stand for a period of 72 hours (three days) or more (e.g., artificial lakes, agricultural irrigation ponds). Also, the project does not involve or support uses that would produce or collect animal waste, such as agricultural operations (e.g., chicken coops, dairies, etc.), solid waste facility, or other similar uses. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase current or future resident's exposure to vectors, including mosquitoes, rats or flies.

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:

- a) Violate any waste discharge requirements?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes a multi-use trail system, visitor staging area, and recreational facilities/structures that would require site design measures and/or source control BMPs and/or treatment control BMPs to reduce potential pollutants to the maximum extent practicable from entering storm water runoff. Additionally, the native vegetation surrounding the trail and staging area would remain undisturbed and would act as a natural biofilter. BMPs would include, but are not limited to, stabilized construction entrance/exit areas, permeable surfaces, and silt fencing. Silt fences and fiber rolls would be specified to minimize surface transport of sediments. These measures would enable the project to meet waste discharge requirements as required by the Land-Use Planning for New Development and Redevelopment Component of the San Diego Municipal Permit (RWQCB Order No. R9-2007-0001), as implemented by the San

Diego County Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program (JURMP)
and Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP).

- b) Is the project tributary to an already impaired water body, as listed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list? If so, could the project result in an increase in any pollutant for which the water body is already impaired?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project lies in the 905.41 Ramona hydrologic subarea within the San Dieguito River hydrologic unit. According to the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list, July 2003, a portion of this watershed at the Pacific Ocean and San Dieguito River is impaired for coliform bacteria. Constituents of concern in the San Dieguito watershed include coliform bacteria; nutrients, sediment, lowered dissolve oxygen, and trace metals. The project proposes the following activities that are associated with these pollutants: minimal amounts of ground disturbance associated with construction of trails, staging area and small recreational facilities. However, site design measures and/or source control BMPs and/or treatment control BMPs would be employed such that potential pollutants would be reduced in any runoff to the maximum extent practicable so as not to increase the level of these pollutants in receiving waters. Additionally, the native vegetation surrounding the trail and staging area would remain undisturbed and would act as a natural biofilter. BMPs for these features would include, but are not limited to, stabilized construction entrance/exit areas, permeable surfaces (no impervious surfaces proposed), and silt fencing. Silt fences and fiber rolls would be specified to minimize surface transport of sediments.

The proposed BMPs are consistent with the regional surface water and storm water planning and permitting process that has been established to improve the overall water quality in County watersheds. As a result the project would not contribute to a cumulative impact to an already impaired water body, as listed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d). Regional surface water and storm water permitting regulation for County of San Diego, Incorporated Cities of San Diego County, and San Diego Unified Port District includes the following: California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), San Diego Region Order No. R9-2007-0001, NPDES No. CAS0108758, issued January 24, 2007; County Watershed Protection, Storm Water Management, and Discharge Control Ordinance (WPO) (Ordinance No. 9926, revised March 2008); County Storm Water Standards Manual adopted on February 20, 2002, and amended August 5, 2003 (Ordinance No. 9589). The stated purposes of these ordinances are to protect the health, safety and general

welfare of the County of San Diego residents; to protect water resources and to improve water quality; to cause the use of management practices by the County and its citizens that will reduce the adverse effects of polluted runoff discharges on waters of the state; to secure benefits from the use of storm water as a resource; and to ensure the County is compliant with applicable state and federal laws. Ordinance No. 9926 (WPO) has discharge prohibitions, and requirements that vary depending on type of land use activity and location in the County. Ordinance No. 9589 is Appendix A of Ordinance No. 9926 (WPO) and sets out in more detail, by project category, what dischargers must do to comply with the Ordinance and to receive permits for projects and activities that are subject to the Ordinance. Collectively, these regulations establish standards for projects to follow which intend to improve water quality from headwaters to the deltas of each watershed in the County. Each project subject to WPO is required to propose BMPs or design measures to mitigate any impacts that may occur in the watershed.

- c) Could the proposed project cause or contribute to an exceedance of applicable surface or groundwater receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial uses?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The Regional Water Quality Control Board has designated water quality objectives for waters of the San Diego Region as outlined in Chapter 3 of the Water Quality Control Plan (Plan). The water quality objectives are necessary to protect the existing and potential beneficial uses of each hydrologic unit as described in Chapter 2 of the Plan.

The project lies in the 905.41 Ramona hydrologic subarea, within the San Dieguito River hydrologic unit that has the following existing and potential beneficial uses for inland surface waters, coastal waters, reservoirs and lakes, and ground water: municipal and domestic supply; agricultural supply; industrial process supply, industrial service supply; contact water recreation; non-contact water recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; wildlife habitat; estuarine habitat; marine habitat; preservation of biological habitats of special significance; migration of aquatic organisms; and, rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat.

The project proposes the construction and maintenance of a multi-use trail, visitor staging area, and several small recreation facilities and structures. In addition, the project would implement invasive non-native plant species

control measures and habitat restoration as necessary. Site design measures and/or source control BMPs and/or treatment control BMPs would be employed to reduce potential pollutants in runoff to the maximum extent practicable, such that the proposed project would not cause or contribute to an exceedance of applicable surface or groundwater receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial uses. Additionally, the native vegetation surrounding the trail and staging area would remain undisturbed and would act as a natural biofilter. BMPs would include, but are not limited to, stabilized construction entrance/exit areas, permeable surfaces (no impervious surfaces proposed), and silt fencing. Silt fences and fiber rolls would be specified to minimize surface transport of sediments.

In addition, the proposed BMPs are consistent with the regional surface water, storm water and groundwater planning and permitting process that has been established to improve the overall water quality in County watersheds. As a result, the project will not contribute to a cumulatively considerable exceedance of applicable surface or groundwater receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial uses. Refer to Section IX., Hydrology and Water Quality, Question b, for more information on regional surface water and storm water planning and permitting process.

- d) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project would obtain its water supply from the RMWD that obtains water from surface reservoirs. The project would not use any groundwater for any purpose, including irrigation, domestic, or commercial demands. In addition, the project does not involve operations that would interfere substantially with groundwater recharge including, but not limited to the following: the project does not involve regional diversion of water to another groundwater basin; or diversion or channelization of a stream course or waterway with impervious layers, such as concrete lining or culverts, for substantial distances (e.g., ¼ mile). These activities and operations can substantially affect rates of groundwater recharge. Therefore, no impact to groundwater resources is anticipated.

- e) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes the construction and maintenance of a multi-use trail, visitor staging area, and several small recreation facilities and structures. In addition, the project would implement invasive non-native plant species control measures and habitat restoration as necessary. The proposed project would implement site design measures, source control, and/or treatment control BMPs to reduce potential pollutants, including sediment from erosion or siltation, to the maximum extent practicable. The project design for the trail and staging area provides for minimal grading and would utilize the natural topography to maintain the existing drainage flow on site. Additionally, the native vegetation surrounding the trails and staging area would remain undisturbed and would act as a natural biofilter. BMPs are required during construction activities and would include, but are not limited to, features such as stabilized construction entrance/exit areas, permeable surfaces, and silt fencing. Silt fences and fiber rolls would be specified to minimize surface transport of sediments. These measures would control erosion and sedimentation and satisfy waste discharge requirements as required by the Land-Use Planning for New Development and Redevelopment Component of the San Diego Municipal Permit (RWQCB Order No. R9-2007-0001), as implemented by the San Diego County Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program (JURMP) and Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP). Due to these factors, it has been found that the project would not result in significantly increased erosion or sedimentation potential and would not alter any drainage patterns of the site or area on- or off-site. In addition, because erosion and sedimentation would be controlled within the boundaries of the project, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact. For further information on soil erosion refer to VI. Geology and Soils, Question b.

- f) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The proposed project would not significantly alter established drainage patterns or significantly increase the amount of runoff for the following reasons:

- The project design for the multi-use trail and staging area utilizes the natural topography and would maintain the existing drainage flow on site.
- Native vegetation surrounding the multi-use trail and staging area would remain undisturbed and would act as a natural biofilter.
- The project would not increase water surface elevation in the Santa Maria Creek or its tributaries.
- The project would not increase surface runoff exiting the project site equal to or greater than one cubic foot/second.

Therefore, the project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. Moreover, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable alteration or a drainage pattern or increase in the rate or amount of runoff, because the project would substantially increase water surface elevation or runoff exiting the site, as detailed above.

- g) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project would result in the conversion of less than 1 percent of the total project site area (3,490 acres) of previously pervious land to impervious surfaces. Additionally, the proposed ranger station and maintenance building would be built on existing or replaced impervious surfaces. This amount of conversion to impervious surfaces would not contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing storm water drainage systems. Therefore, the project would not create or contribute

significant runoff water which would exceed the capacity of the existing storm water drainage system.

h) Provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes minimal grading and construction that has the potential to result in pollution and sedimentation of surface water runoff. The grading plan would include design measures that address storm water protection and erosion control, and a SWPPP would be prepared for the project that outlines specific design measures and BMPs to be employed to reduce potential pollutants to the maximum extent practicable. Refer to VIII. Hydrology and Water Quality Questions a, b, c, for further information.

i) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map, including County Floodplain Maps?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not involve the placement of housing.

j) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project site includes a portion of Santa Maria Creek in the southwest portion of the Preserve which is considered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) a 100-year flood hazard area. This portion of the Preserve is a dedicated flood easement and is part of the Flood Protection Corridor Program and is subject to the terms of

the "Reservation of Conservation and Flood Easement" agreement (DPR 2004). However, the project is not proposing to place structures, access roads, or other improvements which would impede or redirect flood flows in this area.

- k) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project site includes a portion of Santa Maria Creek in the southwest portion of the Preserve which is considered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) a 100-year flood hazard area. This portion of the Preserve is a dedicated flood easement and is part of the Flood Protection Corridor Program and is subject to the terms of the "Reservation of Conservation and Flood Easement" agreement (DPR 2004). However, the project is not proposing to place structures, access roads, or other improvements which would expose people to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding. Additionally, the project site lies outside a mapped dam inundation area for a major dam/reservoir within San Diego County, and is not located immediately downstream of a minor dam that could potentially flood the property.

- l) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

i. SEICHE

No Impact: The project site is not located along the shoreline of a lake or reservoir; therefore, could not be inundated by a seiche.

ii. TSUNAMI

No Impact: The project site is located more than a mile from the coast; therefore, in the event of a tsunami, would not be inundated.

iii. MUDFLOW

No Impact: Mudflow is a type of landslide. The project site contains small, dispersed areas identified as "Landslide Susceptibility Areas". However, the project proposes minimal land disturbance that would expose a small amount of unprotected soils and it is not anticipated that the project would expose people or property to inundation due to a mudflow.

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not propose the introduction of new infrastructure such major roadways or water supply systems, or utilities to the area; therefore, the proposed project will not significantly disrupt or divide the established community.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The proposed project is subject to the General Plan's Regional Land Use Element (RLUE) Policy 2.4 Non-Urban Residential Designations (Multiple Rural Use (18)); Policy 2.5 Agricultural Designations (Intensive Agriculture (19) and General Agriculture (20)); and Policy 2.6 Special Purpose Designations (Specific Plan Area (21) and Public/Semi-Public (22)). The project is consistent with the General Plan because the recreational uses proposed to enhance the existing open space preserve would not conflict with the above listed Land Use Designations that strive to retain rural character of non-urban lands (Goal 2.3); and ensure preservation of contiguous regionally significant open space corridors (Goal 2.6). In addition, the General Plan commits to continue to provide and expand the variety of trail experiences, including staging areas, and provide

connections to other public trail systems pursuant to Countywide Trail Policies 1.1 and 1.3.

The property is zoned S88 Specific Plan which is intended to accommodate Specific Plan areas shown on the San Diego County Plan (refer to above paragraph), and A70 Limited Agriculture which is typically applied to areas throughout the County to protect moderate to high quality agricultural land pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance Section 2700. As previously indicated in Section II. Agricultural Resources, the project would not displace existing nor preclude future agricultural uses and construction and use of the trails and project facilities would not adversely affect existing or future agricultural uses; therefore, the proposed project is consistent with plan and zoning. Additionally, the project adheres to the Ramona Trails and Pathway Plan and community-specific trail design guidelines contained within the County Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP).

The project falls within the Ramona Airport Influence Area and thus is subject to the Ramona Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) (adopted 2006). The proposed project is consistent with the Ramona ALUCP Compatibility Policies pertaining to (1) noise, (2) safety, (3) airspace protection, and (4) overflight compatibility because:

1. Portions of the project area are located inside the CNEL 55 dB(A) contour for the airport and thus are within the noise impact area. However, development of the proposed staging area and recreational facilities would be located outside this noise contour and would be consistent with the noise compatibility policies. A small portion of the proposed multi-use trail would be implemented within the CNEL 65 dB(A) contour. While noise compatibility criteria do not specifically consider a multi-use trail, other similar outdoor recreational uses including regional parks, athletic fields, and golf courses are compatible uses within this contour. For additional information, please refer to section XII.e Noise.
2. Portions of the project area are located within Safety Zones 2 through 6, with a majority within Zone 6 of the Ramona Airport. No development is proposed within Zones 2 through 5 and only the multi-use trail and staging area are proposed within Zone 6. While the safety compatibility criteria do not specifically consider a multi-use trail and staging area, the project may be evaluated with respect to the similar Non-Group Recreation use, which is considered a compatible use within Zone 6. For additional information, please refer to section VIII.d Hazards and Hazardous Materials.
3. The project does not propose structures equal to or greater than 150 feet in height, constituting an airspace obstruction. It also does not propose any use that will cause visual, electronic, or wildlife hazards to aircraft in

flight or taking off or landing at the airport. For additional information, please refer to section XVII.c Transportation/Traffic.

4. The project is located within an overflight easement dedication zone; however, overflight easements are not required for nonresidential development projects. Components of the project include a multi-use trail, staging area, and small recreational facilities/structures; therefore, this policy does not apply to the proposed project.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project site has been classified by the California Department of Conservation - Division of Mines and Geology (Update of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the Western San Diego Production-Consumption Region, 1997) as an area of "Potential Mineral Resource Significance (MRZ-3). However, the project site is surrounded on all sides by developed land uses including residential developments which are incompatible to future extraction of mineral resources within the project site. A future mining operation at the project site would likely create a significant impact to neighboring properties for issues such as noise, air quality, traffic, and possibly other impacts. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value since the mineral resource has already been lost due to surrounding incompatible land uses.

- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project site is zoned Specific Planning Area (S88) and Limited Agricultural Use (A70), which is not considered to be an Extractive Use Zone (S82) nor does it have an Impact Sensitive Land Use Designation

(24) with an Extractive Land Use Overlay (25) (County Land Use Element, 2000).

XII. NOISE -- Would the project result in:

- a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes a multi-use trail, staging area, and several small recreational facilities and structures. The project would not expose people to potentially significant noise levels that exceed the allowable limits of the County of San Diego General Plan, County of San Diego Noise Ordinance, and other applicable standards for the following reasons:

General Plan – Noise Element

The County of San Diego General Plan, Noise Element, Policy 4b addresses noise sensitive areas and requires an acoustical study to be prepared for any use that may expose noise sensitive areas to noise in excess of a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) of 60 decibels (dBA). If the project noise exceeds CNEL 60 dBA, modifications must be made to the project to reduce noise levels. Noise sensitive areas include residences, hospitals, schools, libraries, or similar facilities where quiet is an important attribute. Project implementation is not expected to expose existing or planned noise sensitive areas to road, airport, heliport, railroad, industrial, or other noise in excess of the CNEL 60 dBA. The project is located adjacent to the Ramona Airport which includes noise impact areas of CNEL 60 and 65 dBA that occur within adjacent project boundaries. However, the only project feature that would be implemented within these noise contours would be a small extension of the multi-use trail, which is not identified by the San Diego County General Plan, Noise Element as a noise sensitive land use. Therefore, the project would not expose people to potentially significant noise levels that exceed the allowable limits of the County of San Diego General Plan, Noise Element.

Ramona Community Plan and Ramona ALUCP

The County of San Diego General Plan, Ramona Community Plan, has a standard of CNEL 55 dB(A) for all projected noise contours near main circulation roadways, airports and other noise sources and requires mitigation

if this level is exceeded. Project implementation is not expected to expose existing or planned noise sensitive areas to road airport, heliport, railroad, industrial or other noise in excess of the CNEL 55 dB(A). The project is located adjacent to the Ramona Airport which includes noise impact areas identified by the Ramona ALUCP of CNEL 55, 60, and 65 dBA that occur within adjacent project boundaries. However, the only project feature proposed to be implemented within these noise contours would be a small extension of the multi-use trail, which is not identified as a noise sensitive land use (The Ramona Community Plan refers to the San Diego County General Plan, Noise Element for noise standards). Furthermore, the project would also be consistent with the noise compatibility policies of the Ramona ALUCP. While noise compatibility criteria do not specifically consider a multi-use trail, other similar outdoor recreational uses including regional parks, athletic fields, and golf courses are compatible uses within the CNEL 55, 60, and 65 dBA contours. Therefore, the project would not expose people to potentially significant noise levels that exceed the allowable limits of the County of San Diego General Plan, Ramona Community Plan and Ramona ALUCP.

Noise Ordinance – Section 36-404

Non-transportation noise generated by the project is not expected to exceed the standards of the County of San Diego Noise Ordinance (Section 36-404) at or beyond the project's property line. The site is zoned S88 and A70 which have a one-hour average sound limit of 50 dBA between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., and 45 dBA between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. The adjacent properties are similarly zoned including some residential development, which all have similar one-hour average sound limits. The project does not involve any permanent noise-generating equipment that would exceed applicable noise levels at the adjoining property line.

Noise Ordinance – Section 36-410

The project entails grading and construction, which would produce noise on a temporary basis. The project would not generate construction noise that may exceed the standards of the County of San Diego Noise Ordinance (Section 36-410). Construction operations would occur only during permitted hours of operation pursuant to Section 36-410. The project would not operate construction equipment in proximity of the Preserve's property boundary that would be in excess of 75 dB averaged over an 8-hour period.

- b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not propose any of the following land uses that can be impacted by groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

1. Buildings where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operation, including research and manufacturing facilities with special vibration constraints.
2. Residences and buildings where people normally sleep including hotels, hospitals, residences and where low ambient vibration is preferred.
3. Civic and institutional land uses including schools, churches, libraries, other institutions, and quiet office where low ambient vibration is preferred.
4. Concert halls for symphonies or other special use facilities where low ambient vibration is preferred.

Also, the project does not propose any major, new or expanded infrastructure such as mass transit, highways or major roadways or intensive extractive industry that could generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels on-site or in the surrounding area.

- c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project involves the following permanent noise sources that may increase the noise ambient level: ranger station, staging area, maintenance building, three recreational structures with picnic areas, public viewing pavilion, and a primitive amphitheater. While the project may result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels above existing levels, the increase would not be substantial due to the limited size of the impact area (less than 1 percent of the 3,490-acre project area). As indicated in the response to XII. Noise, Question a., the project would not expose existing or planned noise sensitive areas in the vicinity to a substantial permanent increase in noise levels that exceed the allowable limits of the

County of San Diego General Plan, County of San Diego Noise Ordinance, and other applicable local, State, and Federal noise control. Also, the project is not expected to expose existing or planned noise sensitive areas to noise 10 dB CNEL over existing ambient noise levels, based on review of the project by County staff. Studies completed by the Organization of Industry Standards (ISO 362; ISO 1996 1-3; ISO 3095; and ISO 3740-3747) state an increase of 10 dB is perceived as twice as loud and is perceived as a significant increase in the ambient noise level.

- d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project does not involve any uses that may create substantial temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity including but not limited to extractive industry; outdoor commercial, or industrial uses that involve crushing, cutting, drilling, grinding, or blasting of raw materials; truck depots, transfer stations or delivery areas; or outdoor sound systems.

Project construction noise is not expected to exceed the construction noise limits of the County of San Diego Noise Ordinance (Section 36-410), which are derived from State regulations to address human health and quality of life concerns. Construction operations would occur only during permitted hours of operation (7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday thru Saturday) pursuant to Section 36-410. Also, it is not anticipated that the project would operate construction equipment in excess of 75 dB for more than an 8 hours during a 24-hour period. Therefore, the project would not result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in existing ambient noise levels in the project vicinity.

- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Portions of the proposed project area are located within the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) planning area for the Ramona Airport. However, project implementation is not expected to expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels in excess of the CNEL 60 dB(A). Portions of the project area are located within noise impact areas identified by the Ramona ALUCP of CNEL 55, 60, and 65 dBA; however, the only proposed project feature that would be implemented within these noise contours would be a small extension of the multi-use trail. While noise compatibility criteria of the Ramona ALUCP do not specifically consider a multi-use trail, other similar outdoor recreational uses including regional parks, athletic fields, and golf courses are compatible uses within the CNEL 55, 60, and 65 dBA contours.

- f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project is not located within a one-mile vicinity of a private airstrip; therefore, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive airport-related noise levels.

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes construction of a staging area and recreational facilities which would necessitate the extension of infrastructure and public facilities such as water, electricity, or sewer. However, this physical change would not induce substantial population growth in the area, because the extension of infrastructure such as water, electricity, or sewer into previously unserved areas is consistent with the

County General Plan and the project would be consistent with County planning goals.

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project will not displace any existing housing since the site is currently vacant.

- c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project will not displace a substantial number of people since the site is currently vacant.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- i. Fire protection?
- ii. Police protection?
- iii. Schools?
- iv. Parks?
- v. Other public facilities?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not involve the construction of new or physically altered governmental facilities including but not limited to fire protection facilities, sheriff facilities, schools, or parks in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance service ratios or objectives for any public services. Therefore, the project will not have an adverse physical effect on the environment because the project does not require new or significantly altered services or facilities to be constructed.

XV. RECREATION

- a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The project does not propose any residential use, including but not limited to a residential subdivision, mobile home park, or construction for a single-family residence that may increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities in the vicinity.

- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project involves new recreational facilities including a new ranger station, horse riding arena, staging area parking, maintenance building, primitive amphitheater, multi-use trail system, viewing pavilion, and several picnic areas with shade structures. However, as outlined in this Environmental Analysis Form, these new facilities would not result in adverse physical effects on the environment. Specifically, refer to sections I. Aesthetics, IV. Biological Resources, V. Cultural Resources, VI. Geology and Soils, and VIII. Hydrology and Water Quality for more information.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:

- a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of the effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths and mass transit?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

The County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance for Traffic and Transportation (Guidelines) establish measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. These Guidelines incorporate standards from the County of San Diego Public Road Standards and Public Facilities Element (PFE), the County of San Diego Transportation Impact Fee Program and the Congestion Management Program.

Less than Significant: The proposed project would accommodate parking for 2 employees, 30 visitor vehicles, and 18 horse trailers with additional overflow car parking available if needed.

While San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) trip generation tables are typically used to estimate trip generation for land development projects, the SANDAG "Brief Guide for Vehicular Generation Rates" does not include a rate/category that would apply to the proposed staging area and multi-use trail. Therefore, it was assumed that day users of the staging area for hiker, bikers, and equestrians would stay for at least two to four hours to utilize the proposed trail. Conservatively assuming the staging area would, on average, fill to capacity twice daily with cars and once daily for horse trailers, 18 trailers and 60 cars would be serviced daily. Assuming two trips per vehicle (one inbound trip and one outbound trip); the staging area would generate 156 vehicular trips. Recreational trips could peak at this level during weekends and holidays and reduced usage would occur on the typical weekday. Very few trips would occur during the weekday peak periods.

Access to the Preserve is provided by several gates along or near Rangeland, Montecito, and Highland Valley Roads. Currently, the Preserve is not open to the public; however, there are existing undesignated trails onsite and public access is proposed by the project. A Traffic Impact Analysis, dated December 16, 2004, prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers was completed for the residential Oak Country Estates project previously proposed for the project site and was included in the Final Oak Country Estates Environmental Impact Report (Certified May 2006). Estimating the previous Oak Country Estates project proposed to be built in the southwestern portion would generate 684 ADT, the Traffic Impact Analysis concluded that the addition of project traffic would not substantially increase traffic in the area and that street system operations would remain unchanged and continue to operate at existing levels of service. No significant project impacts were calculated at signalized or unsignalized intersections or street segments based on County criteria.

Given the previous determination that there would be no project-level traffic impacts for an increase in 684 ADT, it can be reasonably assumed that the current proposed project, which will generate substantially less traffic (156 ADT) outside of peak hours, will also not result in significant traffic impacts. Furthermore, the small number of additional trips does not surpass County traffic impact thresholds and does not require mitigation. Therefore, the project will not have a significant direct project impact on traffic volume, which is considered substantial in relation to existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.

- b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant: A Traffic Impact Analysis, dated December 16, 2004, prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers was completed for the residential Oak Country Estates project previously proposed for the southwestern portion of the project site and was included in the Final Oak Country Estates Environmental Impact Report (Certified May 2006). The Traffic Impact Analysis concluded that all roads in the vicinity of the project site, except for SR 67, are projected to operate at LOS D or better in the future. SR 67 will continue to operate at LOS F between Poway Road and Ramona Street, while the segment between Ramona Street to SR 78 will change from LOS D to LOS F.

As indicated above, it is conservatively assumed that the proposed project will generate 156 ADT. The proposed project is expected to add less than 100 trips to Circulation Element roads projected to operate at LOS F and less than 200 trips to Circulation Element Roads projected to operate at LOS E. Therefore, the proposed project will not cause the traffic impact threshold guidelines established by the County of San Diego to be exceeded. The proposed project will not prevent the planned Circulation Element road system from operating at its planned level of service at buildout. Implementation of the proposed project will not result in a significant traffic impact to the planned road network.

- c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The main compatibility concerns for the protection of airport airspace are related to airspace obstructions (e.g., building height, antennas, etc.) and hazards to flight (e.g., wildlife attractants, distracting lighting or glare, etc.). The proposed project is located within the Ramona Airport Influence Area. The project includes would develop a multi-use trail (for hiking, biking, and equestrian use), staging area, and several small recreational facilities and structures. Portions of the project area are located within Safety Zones 2 through 6, with a majority within Zone 6 (includes lowest level of risk) of the Ramona Airport. No development is proposed within Zones 2 though 5 and only the multi-use trail and staging area are proposed within Zone 6. While the safety compatibility criteria do not specifically consider a multi-use trail or staging area, the project may be evaluated with respect to the similar Non-Group Recreation use, which is considered a compatible use within Zone 6. Because the proposed land uses are consistent with the allowable land uses identified for the Traffic Pattern Zone within the ALUCP for Ramona airport, the project would not result in a change in air traffic patterns because the allowable land uses within airport safety zones are created for the purpose of ensuring ongoing airport safety, including maintenance of air traffic patterns. Furthermore, the project would not exceed the FAA Part 77 criteria related to airspace obstructions. Refer also to section VIII.e Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks.

- c) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project would not alter traffic patterns, roadway design, place incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment) on existing roadways, or create or place curves, slopes or walls which impede adequate sight distance on a road.

- e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. The project is not served by a dead-end road that exceeds the maximum cumulative length permitted by the San Diego County Consolidated Fire Code, therefore, the project has adequate emergency access. Furthermore, the RMP management directives include implementation measures focused on providing and improving emergency vehicle access within the Preserve. Additionally, roads used to access the proposed project site have been reviewed by CalFire and were deemed adequate for emergency access.

- f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project includes the development of a multi-use trail, visitor staging area, and several small recreation facilities and structures. Project implementation would not result in any construction or new road

design features; therefore, would not conflict with policies regarding alternative transportation.

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project proposes to discharge domestic waste to on-site wastewater systems (OSWS), also known as septic systems. The project involves two septic systems associated with existing houses located in the NE portion of the Preserve. Discharged wastewater must conform to the Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) applicable standards, including the Regional Basin Plan and the California Water Code. California Water Code Section 13282 allows RWQCBs to authorize a local public agency to issue permits for OSWS "to ensure that systems are adequately designed, located, sized, spaced, constructed and maintained." The RWQCBs with jurisdiction over San Diego County have authorized the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health (DEH) to issue certain OSWS permits throughout the County and within the incorporated cities.

DEH has reviewed the OSWS lay-out for the project pursuant to DEH, Land and Water Quality Division's, "On-site Wastewater Systems: Permitting Process and Design Criteria." DEH was unable to test the two existing septic systems because water is not currently available at the houses. The house on the bottom of the hill is on a city water meter and the water pipe is within 10-15 feet of the house. The nearest water source for the house on the hill is a well at the bottom of the hill about 300 yards to the west. DEH took water samples at this well in February 2011 and the water passed a colilert test and is potable. In order to test the septic system, a new water line (part of the proposed Project) would have to be dug from the well to the house on top of the hill. DEH reported that the septic tank associated with the house at the bottom of the hill is partially filled w/ dirt so it will need to be replaced with a new plastic tank but will use the same footprint. DEH also reported that the septic tank associated with the house on the hill seems functional, but would need to be tested. This septic tank could be replaced with a new plastic tank and would use the same footprint. Therefore, the project is consistent with the wastewater treatment requirements of the RWQCB as determined by the authorized, local public agency.

- b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project would be served by the Ramona Municipal Water District (water). Existing water pipelines are associated with the infrastructure found on-site. Therefore, the project would not require any construction of new or expanded facilities that would cause significant environmental effects.

- c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated: The project involves new and/or expanded storm water drainage facilities. The new and/or expanded facilities include ingress road improvements, and parking for the ranger station and visitor staging. However, as outlined in this IS/MND, the new and/or expanded facilities will not result in adverse physical effect on the environment, because all related impacts from the proposed storm water facilities have been mitigated to a level below significance.

- d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: The project would be served by the Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD). Existing water pipelines are associated

with the infrastructure found on-site. Therefore, the project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project.

- e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

No Impact: The proposed project will rely completely on an onsite wastewater system (septic system); therefore, the project will not interfere with any wastewater treatment provider's service capacity.

- f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Implementation of the project will generate solid waste. All solid waste facilities, including landfills require solid waste facility permits to operate. In San Diego County, the County Department of Environmental Health, Local Enforcement Agency issues solid waste facility permits with concurrence from the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) under the authority of the Public Resources Code (Sections 44001-44018) and California Code of Regulations Title 27, Division 2, Subdivision 1, Chapter 4 (Section 21440et seq.). There are five, permitted active landfills in San Diego County with remaining capacity. Therefore, there is sufficient existing permitted solid waste capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs.

- g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: Implementation of the project would generate solid waste. All solid waste facilities, including landfills require solid waste facility permits to operate. In San Diego County, the County Department of Environmental Health, Local Enforcement Agency issues solid waste facility permits with concurrence from the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) under the authority of the Public Resources Code (Sections 44001-44018) and California Code of Regulations Title 27, Division 2, Subdivision 1, Chapter 4 (Section 21440et seq.). The project would deposit all solid waste at a permitted solid waste facility and therefore, would comply with Federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

- a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: Per the instructions for evaluating environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory were considered in the response to each question in sections IV and V of this form. In addition to project specific impacts, the evaluation of the projects potential for significant cumulative effects is considered below in XVIII.b. The project would affect resources considered sensitive by federal, state, or local government. Resources that have been evaluated as significant would be potentially impacted by the project, particularly biological and cultural resources. However, mitigation has been included that clearly reduces these effects to a level below significance. This mitigation includes avoidance of the special-status species breeding seasons and active nests or burrows, biological monitoring, off-site preservation of habitat or acquisition of

mitigation credits, presence of an archaeological monitor during land disturbance activities near cultural sites, and avoidance of cultural resources during final siting of trails and infrastructure. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that, after mitigation, significant effects associated with this project would result. No other impacts related to this question are anticipated with implementation of the project. Therefore, this impact is less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

The project site is located adjacent to and west of the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area within the Ramona Community Plan boundary. The Environmental Impact Report for the Montecito Ranch Specific Plan (Montecito Ranch EIR), certified on August 4th, 2010, includes a list of over 100 past, present, and future projects that were evaluated as part of the EIR. Consistent with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Montecito Ranch EIR was used in the preparation of this cumulative analysis and is incorporated herein by reference. Please take note; due to the high number of projects included in the Montecito Ranch EIR cumulative list, a project list table is not provided in this Initial Study. Please refer to the Montecito Ranch EIR, starting on page 1-56 for the complete cumulative list of projects. The Montecito Ranch EIR is available for viewing at the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use located at 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B in San Diego, California.

Less than Significant Impact:

Per the instructions for evaluating environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential for adverse cumulative effects were considered in the response to each question in sections I through XVIII of this form. In addition to project specific impacts, this evaluation considered the projects potential for incremental effects that are cumulatively considerable. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that there are significant cumulative effects associated with this project. A cumulative analysis summary for each environmental resource section is provided below.

Aesthetics

The project would not result in cumulative impacts on a scenic vista or visual character because the proposed project viewshed and past, present and future projects within that viewshed have been evaluated and determined to not considerably contribute to a significant cumulative impact. Those projects evaluated in the Montecito Ranch EIR are located within a scenic vista's viewshed, but would not contribute to a cumulative impact because the cumulatively related projects do not involve substantial modification of the existing landforms or the blockage of existing views. In addition, the Montecito Ranch project itself incorporates several mitigation measures to reduce any impacts on aesthetic resources to less than significant. The project-related effects on a scenic vista or visual character were determined to be less than significant. The project would not alter the landscape in such a way as to result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista as native vegetation would remain or be replaced, and no blockages of views would result. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on a scenic vista or visual character would be less than significant.

The project would not result in cumulative impacts on scenic resources within a State scenic highway because the project and all cumulative projects are not located in the vicinity of a designated state scenic highway. Therefore, significant cumulative impacts on a scenic resource within a State scenic highway would not occur.

The project would not result in cumulative impacts related to substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views because the project and all cumulative projects would conform to the County's Light Pollution Code. Mandatory compliance for all new building permits ensures that this project in combination with all past, present and future projects will not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact on day or nighttime views.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Implementation of the proposed project would not contribute to the loss of agriculture or forestry resources. The project would not have a cumulative level impact related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance to a non-agricultural use because none of the existing agricultural uses in the vicinity of the project would be displaced nor would future agricultural uses be precluded as a result of construction of the cumulative projects. Similarly, the proposed project would not result in a cumulative impact related to conflicts with agricultural zoning use because none of the existing agricultural uses in the project vicinity would be displaced nor would future agricultural uses be precluded as a result of the cumulative projects. Additionally, the area does not consist of land under a Williamson Act contract and does not have any

existing Timberland Production Zones. Therefore, significant cumulative impacts on agriculture or forestry resources would not occur.

Air Quality

See discussion under III. c. Air Quality above. The proposed project as well as the past, present and future projects within the surrounding area, have emissions below the screening-level criteria established by the LUEG guidelines for determining significance, therefore, the construction and operational emissions associated with the proposed project are not expected to create a cumulatively considerable impact nor a considerable net increase of PM₁₀, or any O₃ precursors.

Biological Resources

Special Status Species

Current, future, or reasonably foreseeable projects in the cumulative assessment area that were reviewed in association with the cumulative analysis include: the Ramona Airport Improvement Project, Cumming Ranch, Montecito Ranch, and the Ramona Air Center. Together these projects would result in potential impacts to arroyo toad, burrowing owl, Stephens' kangaroo rat, and nesting birds. While the project's impacts associated with the proposed trail network and associated facilities/improvements would contribute to cumulative impacts to these special-status species, the overall project (which includes preservation and long-term maintenance and management of the approximately 3,490-acre Preserve for the benefit of special-status species) and associated impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Riparian Habitat or Sensitive Natural Community

Current, future, or reasonably foreseeable projects in the cumulative assessment area that were reviewed in association with the cumulative analysis include: the Ramona Airport Improvement Project, Cumming Ranch, Montecito Ranch, and the Ramona Air Center. Together these projects would result in impacts to southern mixed chaparral, grasslands, wetland/riparian vegetation, and oak woodlands. While the project's impacts associated with the proposed trail network and associated facilities/improvements would contribute to cumulative impacts to these riparian habitats and sensitive natural communities, the overall project (which includes preservation and long-term maintenance and management of the approximately 3,490-acre Preserve) and associated impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways

Implementation of the proposed project and recent and foreseeable projects in the vicinity would not result in significant cumulative impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and waters. Federal, state, and county policies require that projects have no net loss of jurisdictional wetlands and waters. Jurisdictional impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through (1) acquisition of

permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), (2) the preservation of the remaining portions of Santa Maria Creek located within the Preserve, and (3) off-site restoration and/or enhancement; the details of the mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional resources (including a conceptual mitigation plan) will be finalized as part of the permitting process with the USACE, CDFG, and RWQCB. A creation component is not proposed due to the negligible impact acreage. Other development projects in the vicinity would be required to comply with these policies for wetland mitigation; therefore, the project's incremental contribution to significant cumulative impacts related to jurisdictional wetlands and waterways would be less than significant.

Wildlife Movement and Nursery Sites

As discussed in Section IV.d. above, the proposed project is not expected to impact wildlife dispersal corridors or wildlife movement; thus, there would be no cumulative contributions to wildlife dispersal within the region.

Local Policies, Ordinances, and Adopted Plans

The project would not contribute to potentially cumulatively significant conflicts with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

Cultural Resources

The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative cultural resources impact because project-related effects would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through monitoring and resource avoidance.

Geology and Soils

The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to the exposure of people or structures to geologic hazards. The project vicinity is not located in a fault rupture hazard zone identified by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, Special Publication 42, Revised 1997, Fault-Rupture Hazards Zones in California, or located within any other area with substantial evidence of a known fault. The vicinity of the project is also not located within or near other geological formations, such as lateral subsidence or spreading, that are unstable or would potentially become unstable as a result of cumulative projects. Additionally, to ensure the structural integrity of all buildings and structures, all cumulative projects must conform to the Seismic Requirements as outlined within the California Building Code. Similarly, the potential for cumulative liquefaction and landslide impacts would be less than significant because all cumulative projects would undergo project-specific design review to ensure that people or structures would not be exposed to adverse effects from landslides. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to significant cumulative impacts related to geologic hazards would be less than significant.

Concerning erosion or the loss of topsoil, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact because all the of past, present and future projects that involve grading or land disturbance are required to follow the requirements of: the San Diego County Code of Regulations, Title 8, Zoning and Land Use Regulations, Division 7, Sections 87.414 (DRAINAGE - EROSION PREVENTION) and 87.417 (PLANTING); California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), San Diego Region Order No. R9-2007-0001, NPDES No. CAS0108758, issued January 24, 2007; County Watershed Protection, Storm Water Management, and Discharge Control Ordinance (WPO) (Ord. No. 9926 revised March 2008); and County Storm Water Standards Manual adopted on February 20, 2002, and amended August 5, 2003 (Ordinance No. 9589). All cumulative projects are also required to comply with the improvement requirements identified in the 1997 UBC, Division III – Design Standard for Design of Slab-On-Ground Foundations to Resist the Effects of Expansive Soils and Compressible Soils, which ensure suitable structure safety in areas with expansive soils. Lastly, all cumulative projects would be required to complete project-specific analysis to ensure that soils underlying the site would be capable of supporting the use of septic tanks, or a service availability letter from the RMWD would be obtained that assures adequate capacity for the cumulative projects' wastewater disposal needs. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts related to soils that could create substantial risks to life or property would not be significant.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

See discussion under VII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions above. The project's incremental contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts associated with GHG emissions would be less than significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable hazards or hazardous materials impacts because the project would adhere to the requirements that regulate hazardous substances and initial planning, ongoing monitoring, and inspections would occur in compliance with local, State, and Federal regulation. Furthermore, the DEH HMD is required to conduct ongoing routine inspections to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations; to identify safety hazards that could cause or contribute to an accidental spill or release; and to suggest preventative measures to minimize the risk of a spill or release of hazardous substances. Due to the strict requirements that regulate hazardous substances and the fact that the initial planning, ongoing monitoring, and inspections would occur in compliance with local, State, and Federal regulation; the project would not result in any potentially significant impacts related to the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous substances or related to the accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances. Additionally, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would also be required to comply with these

applicable regulations along with CEQA review related to hazardous materials and waste. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts related to the routine use and storage of hazardous materials would not be significant.

The project also proposes to demolish or renovate onsite structures that were constructed prior to 1980 that have been determined to contain both lead and asbestos. In accordance with existing California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CAL/OSHA) regulations, the project would be required to incorporate asbestos and lead abatement and control measures as part of demolition or renovation activities (County of San Diego 2011). All past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would also be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies and regulations along with CEQA review related to hazardous materials and waste. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable hydrology and water quality impacts because the project would conform to the waste discharge requirements listed under IX. Hydrology and Water Quality above. These requirements ensure the project would not create cumulatively considerable water quality impacts related to waste discharge because, through the permit, the project would conform to Countywide watershed standards in the JURMP and SUSMP, derived from State regulation to address human health and water quality concerns. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact to water quality from waste discharges. Furthermore, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any hydrology and water quality impacts are identified and mitigated. In addition, all cumulative projects would be required to comply with applicable Federal, State, and local policies and regulations related to hydrology and water quality. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

Concerning cumulative groundwater impacts, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact because the proposed BMPs the project would implement to protect groundwater resources are consistent with the regional surface water, storm water and groundwater planning and permitting process that has been established to improve the overall water quality in County watersheds. As a result, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable exceedance of applicable surface or groundwater receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial uses. Furthermore, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any impacts on

groundwater are identified and mitigated. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to groundwater.

Land Use and Planning

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable land use and planning impacts because the project would have no features that would physically divide an established community and is consistent with the County of San Diego General Plan, Ramona Community Plan, and the Ramona Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). Additionally, the project adheres to the Ramona Trails and Pathway Plan and community-specific trail design guidelines contained within the County Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP). Furthermore, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any land use and planning impacts are identified and mitigated. In addition, all cumulative projects would be reviewed to ensure they comply with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance). Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative land use and planning impacts would not be significant.

Mineral Resources

The project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value because the project site is surrounded on all sides by developed land uses which are incompatible to future extraction of mineral resources within the project site. Additionally, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any mineral resources impacts are identified and mitigated. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to mineral resources.

Noise

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable noise impacts because the project would not exceed the allowable limits of the County of San Diego General Plan, Noise Element, allowable limits of the County of San Diego General Plan, Ramona Community Plan and Ramona ALUCP, applicable noise levels at the adjoining property line, or standards of the County of San Diego Noise Ordinance (Section 36-410). The project's conformance to these policies and ordinances ensures the project would not create cumulatively considerable noise impacts, because the project would not exceed the local noise standards for noise sensitive areas; and the project would not exceed the applicable noise level limits at the property line or construction noise limits, derived from State regulation to address human health and quality of life concerns. Additionally, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific

CEQA analysis to ensure any noise impacts are identified and mitigated along with additional review to ensure they comply with applicable local policies, regulations, and ordinances related to noise. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable exposure of persons or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan, noise ordinance, and applicable standards of other agencies.

Population and Housing

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable population and housing impacts because the project does not propose housing or any other features that would affect population or housing. In addition, all past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any population and housing impacts are identified and mitigated. Therefore, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to population and housing.

Public Services

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable public services impacts because the level of demand for these services to serve the project would not significantly increase. In addition, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any public services impacts are identified and mitigated. Applicants of all the cumulative projects would pay all required development impact fees to offset the costs of increased demands on public services in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance service ratios or objectives for any public services. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulative considerable public services impact.

Recreation

The project would not result in any significant impacts on recreation that could contribute to cumulative impacts. The project does not propose any residential use and the proposed facilities would not result in adverse physical effects on the environment. Moreover, beneficial effects would result with implementation of the proposed Project because it would provide resource management and recreational use improvements to enhance the existing 3,490-acre Ramona Grasslands Preserve. Therefore, the project's contribution to recreational cumulative impacts would be positive.

Transportation

Cumulative impacts related to conflicts with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of the effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system would not be significant. The addition of project traffic would not substantially increase traffic in the area and the street system operations would remain unchanged and continue to operate at existing

levels of service. Additionally, no significant project impacts were calculated at signalized or unsignalized intersections or street segments based on County criteria. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative traffic impacts would be less than significant.

Additionally, significant cumulative impacts related to conflicts with an applicable congestion management program would not occur. The project would not exceed the traffic impact threshold guidelines established by the County of San Diego. Additionally, the proposed project would not prevent the planned Circulation Element road system from operating at its planned level of service at buildout. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative traffic impact to the planned road network.

The project would also not result in significant cumulative impacts related to change in air traffic patterns, because although the proposed project is located within the Ramona Airport Influence Area, the proposed land uses are consistent with the allowable land uses identified for the Traffic Pattern Zone within the ALUCP for Ramona airport.

Lastly, impacts related to the increase of hazards due to a design feature or inadequate emergency access would not occur. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

Utilities and Service Systems

The project would not contribute to cumulatively considerable utilities and service systems impacts because existing utility and energy systems are adequately sized and have available capacity to meet the needs of the proposed Project. Moreover, all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects would be required to undergo project-specific CEQA analysis to ensure any utilities and service systems impacts are identified and mitigated. In addition, all cumulative projects would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local policies and regulations related to utilities and service systems. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts from present and reasonably foreseeable future projects on utilities and service systems would be less than significant.

- c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than Significant Impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated | <input type="checkbox"/> No Impact |

Discussion/Explanation:

Less than Significant Impact: In the evaluation of environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential for adverse direct or indirect impacts to human beings were considered in the response to certain questions in sections I. Aesthetics, III. Air Quality, VI. Geology and Soils, VIII. Hazards and Hazardous Materials, IX Hydrology and Water Quality X. Noise, XIII. Population and Housing, and XVII. Transportation and Traffic. As a result of this evaluation, there is no substantial evidence that there are adverse effects on human beings associated with this project. Therefore, this project has been determined not to meet this Mandatory Finding of Significance.

XIV. REFERENCES USED IN THE COMPLETION OF THE INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

All references to Federal, State and local regulation are available on the Internet. For Federal regulations refer to <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>. For State regulations refer to www.leginfo.ca.gov. For County regulation refer to www.amlegal.com. All other references are available upon request.

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